

S E R M O N S
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D I S C O U R S E S
O N

Several important Subjects in Divinity.

Never before printed.

By the late Reverend and Learned
Mr THOMAS BOSTON
Minister of the Gospel at Faverick.

And by it he being dead, yet speaketh, Heb. xi. 4.

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M D C C L V I.

THE MUSEUM
AND
DISCOURSES
ON

Several important Subjects in Divinity.

Never before printed.



By the Rev. Mr. Thomas
BOSTON

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The gift of Mr Twostlake
to J R - 29th Nov - 1789

S E R M O N S

O N

The following IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

- I. The Nature and Necessity of Repentance.
- II. The Danger of delaying Repentance.
- III. The extraordinary Case of the Thief on the Cross no Argument for delaying Repentance.
- IV. God's Delay of executing the Sentence of Condemnation against ungodly Men, often miserably abused by them.
- V. The Sinfulness and Hazard of a Profession of Religion, without a correspondent Practice.
- VI. The Mystery of Sanctification by Christ, opened up.
- VII. The distinguishing Characters of real Christians.
- VIII. The Christian Warfare.

STERN

The following important subjects.

- I. The Present and Prospective Condition of the Church of England.
- II. The Danger of a Third of the Crole no.
- III. The Extent of the Danger for delay.
- IV. God's Delay of executing the Sentence of God's.
- V. The Danger of a Third of the Crole no.
- VI. The Danger of a Third of the Crole no.
- VII. The Danger of a Third of the Crole no.
- VIII. The Danger of a Third of the Crole no.



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ADVERTISEMENT

To the READER.

THE following practical discourses upon some of the most important subjects of Christianity, are published to the world from the manuscripts of the worthy author, my father, which he had prepared for the pulpit only. No doubt, they would have been much fuller on the several subjects, and likewise more correct, had the author lived to publish them, or if he had left them prepared for the press, as he did some discourses which since his death have been well received in the world, and have accordingly undergone several impressions. The attentive reader will observe the sermons on *Philp. iii. 3.* and those on *John xiii. 8.* considerably fuller than the rest. I find from his *Diary*, that he studied them with more than ordinary application: and he thankfully acknowledges the divine assistance afforded him therein. At the same time, he does not give any hint, as if he had designed to peruse them for publication. But it is hoped, though these discourses labour under the disadvantages which commonly attend posthumous works, they may, through the divine blessing, be useful for gaining sinners to repentance, and for strengthening and establishing saints in the paths of truth and holiness.

Readers of an evangelical taste will here find very good entertainment; and those of another, or opposite taste, know where to get their palates gratified. We only wish, they would show so much good nature, and good manners, as not to rail against those of a different taste, since they have no title to make their own the standard.

I have no apprehension, that this orphan venturing out into the world, will meet with any harsh or ungenteel usage, if it escape the rough hands of those people who have the management of the *Reviewing Office*, lately erected in the metropolis of this kingdom. The lofty title page of that paper,

paper, (THE EDINBURGH REVIEW), compared with the dull entertainment which the paper itself affords to any who will be at the pains to read it, puts me in mind of *Lucian's* observation on the *Egyptian* temples. He says, they were such rich, splendid, and magnificent structures, that strangers looking upon them, would have imagined some great deity within; but upon being allowed to enter them, they were quite confounded, while nothing was to be seen but *an ape, a cat, or a py'd bull*. I am sorry that a late author, who writes in a very genteel and distinct manner, should have condescended to remark on this paper. Had no notice been taken of it, it would in all probability have wrought out its own exit very quickly. But this performance will readily make it linger out some months longer.

The worthy author of the following discourses being long since entered into his Master's joy, is no more concerned in the praises or reproaches of men. Mean time, his character is so fully established, both in the religious and learned world, that the attempts of pride, ignorance, and bigotry, against it, will appear mean and contemptible.

It is proper here to advertise the reader, that the sermon on *Rev. xxi. 22.* mentioned by the publisher in his proposals, would have made a part of this collection; but the original manuscript upon perusal was found imperfect, and therefore it is not inserted.

7 OCT 63

THOMAS BOSTON.

Oxnam Manse,

June 7. 1756.

THE

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES.

The Necessity of REPENTANCE.

Several SERMONS, preached at *Ettrick*,
in the Year 1717.

LUKE xiii. 5.

I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

WHEN we consider the abounding sin and hardness of heart prevailing under a preached gospel, it must needs let us see, that the doctrine of repentance is both necessary and seasonable, to pluck the brands out of the burning; or if that will not do, to leave men without excuse. Sinners slave off repentance, as if they were resolved to persist in sin come what will, or at least as halting betwixt two opinions: But here is a peremptory decision of the case in this text, *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

In these words we have two things.

1. An abuse of a dispensation of providence corrected: *I tell you, Nay.* Some had told our Lord the news of *Pilate* the Roman governor's falling on some *Galileans*, with his soldiers, and killing them, while they were sacrificing. It seems the tellers of this news, or others in the company, were apt to think, that these were sinners beyond others, because an unordinary judgment had fallen on them. Our Lord tells them, that it would not bear such a conclusion. He puts them in mind of another remarkable providence, viz. the tower of *Siloam* in *Jerusalem* its falling on and killing eighteen persons: but here he shews that this did not befall them, because they were greater sinners than all the

rest in *Jerusalem*; nay there were as great sinners as those, which missed that stroke, and others like it too.

2. The right use of the dispensation instructed: *But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The right use is to learn repentance from the ruin of others; if others give us an example at their own cost, that we take heed to it, and improve it to our repentance and reformation. This is the import of the particle *but*. These words are a peremptory certification given to sinners by our Lord. And the proposition in its own nature includes a twofold certification.

1st, A certification of ruin upon impenitence. Sinners go on in their course, yet hope that all may be well for all that. No, says our Lord, deceive not yourselves; for if ye do not repent, there is no saving of you. There is here,

(1.) The matter on which the certification is given, *Except ye repent; i. e.* If ye do not repent, if ye be not duly humbled for your sins, and sincerely turn from them. If ye harden your hearts under your guilt, keep still your sinful courses, and refuse to let them go, they will ruin you.

(2.) The thing certified, which is *perishing likewise*; not perishing in that very manner, but ye shall perish as surely as they did. The judgments of God shall pursue you, and ye shall perish for ever.

(3.) The extent of the certification, *All—perish*. This clears the perishing to be meant of everlasting death. *Q. d.* Though signal-temporal judgments do not pursue all that are impenitent, yet eternal punishment will; no impenitent sinner shall escape that, however they may escape temporal strokes of signal vengeance.

(4.) The peremptoriness of it. This appears in two things 1. That solemn assertion, *I tell you*, supposed to be repeated in the last clause. Take it out of the mouth of the Lord himself, that ye shall perish except ye repent. *Q. d.* This has been told you by many, but ye would not believe: but now I tell it you out of my own mouth. And to hear this out of the mouth of the Saviour, may strike a sinner with concern, and let him see, that Christ's blood will never be laid out on a person continuing impenitent, to save him from death. 2. In the relation intimate to be between the punishment of those so signally smitten by the hand of God, and the future punishment of all impenitent sinners; the former is a pledge of the latter. This is intimated by the particle *likewise*.

2dly, A certification of life upon repentance. This is implied here as *Gen. ii. 17.* God has made as sure a connection betwixt repentance and life, as betwixt impenitence and death. Be your sins never so great, if you repent of them, and turn from them, they shall never be your ruin.

Before I come to the main point I design, I shall lay before you some observations from the words.

Obf. 1. *That those who meet with more signal strokes than others, are not therefore, nor are to be accounted greater sinners than others.* The Lord spares some as great sinners, as he signally punisheth. *I tell you, Nay.*

Reasons of this dispensation of Providence.

1. Because of God's sovereign power and absolute dominion, which he will have the world to understand: *Matth. xx. 15.* *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* Thus our Lord accounts for the dispensation of the man's being born blind, *John ix. 3.* All men have that in them and about them, which may make them liable to the heaviest strokes that any of the children of men meet with; and therefore whatever any suffer, the Lord does them no wrong, since he punishes them less than their iniquity deserves: but amongst many whom justice may strike, sovereignty picks out some, and causes them to smart. And who may say, *What dost thou?*

2. Because we are now under the mixed dispensation of providence; not the unmixed, reserved to another world, when all men shall be put into their unalterable state. Now, hereunto this is very agreeable, that God signally punish some of a society, while others as guilty do escape, that the whole may, with *David, Psal. ci. 1.* *sing of mercy, and judgment too.* And thus the dispensation of divers colours is held up in the world, as a display of the manifold wisdom of God.

3. Because the mercy of God to some is magnified by his severity on others. As black set by white makes the white appear the better; so God's severity against some, may be a looking-glass to others, wherein they may see how much they stand obliged to free grace and mercy, *Rom. xi. 22.* Men are never fairer to prize health in themselves, than when they see others tossed on sick-beds; nor to prize the exercise of sense and reason, and other mercies, than when they see what miserable and pitiful sights they are that are deprived of these. And this should make folk patient and thankful under the strokes of the Lord's hand, because

if he take away a mercy, health for instance, or perhaps a member or limb of their body, being taken away, it may be more serviceable for him, than when they had it, in so far as it shall serve to magnify the mercy of God to others, that see and notice the hand of the Lord. See *Matth. xxi. 3.*

4. Because in very signal strokes very signal mercies may be wrapped up. So it was in *Joseph's* case; there was a very singular blessing on the head of him that was separated from his brethren. *Job's* troubles were but a dark hour before a very glorious day. The halt *Jacob* got in his thigh, was more excellent, as a badge of his wrestling with the angel, than *Esau's* retinue of four hundred men.

5. *lastly*, Because this dispensation is in some sort necessary to confirm us in the belief of the judgment of the great day. God punishes some remarkably, that the world may see that there is a God that judgeth on the earth; he does not so punish all, that men may be assured that there is a judgment to come. If none were punished here, the world would improve that for Atheism; if all were punished, it would be improved to Sadducism.

Use. 1. Then learn that unordinary strokes may befall those that are not unordinary sinners; and therefore be not rash in your judgment concerning the strokes that others meet with. It is true, whatever we or others meet with, it is deserved at the Lord's hand; and when God follows an unordinary seen sin with an unordinary judgment, as in the case of *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, it is no breach of charity to judge that that stroke comes for that sin. But when people, in whose conversation ye see no signal sin, meet with signal strokes, beware of harsh judging. For in the way of the Lord's dispensation, some will meet with a signal stroke for some sin, such as the world would think little or nothing of, if they knew it.

2. Then adore the mercy of God to you, and wonder at his sparing of you, when ye see others smart under the hand of God, which ye do not feel. Acknowledge, that whatever others meet with, the same might have been your lot, if the Lord had dealt with you as ye deserve; as the church did, *Lam. iii. 22.* *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*

Obf. 2. That the strokes which any meet with, are pledges of ruin to impenitent sinners. But except ye repent, ye shall all LIKEWISE perish.

Reasons

Reasons of this are,

1. Because they shew how hateful to God sin is, in whomsoever it is : *Is. xlii. 24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers ? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned ? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.* God has no delight in the misery of his own creatures, *Ezek. xviii. 23.* He must therefore have a mighty hatred against sin, in that he is so heavy oftentimes on the work of his own hands for it. Not only his enemies smart for sin, but his dear friends ; yea, his dear Son smarted for it, when it lay on him but by imputation. And therefore how can impenitent sinners think to escape ? *Luke xxiii. 31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?*

2. Because they shew how just God is. He is *the Judge of all the earth*, and cannot but do right, *Gen. xviii. 25.* Now, though justice may delay the punishment of one longer than another, yet it will not allow to punish some, and for ever to spare others, in the same state. For that would be manifest partiality, which God hateth, *Ezek. xviii. 20.* And therefore the Apostle tells us, *2 Thess. i. 6. that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble the saints.*

3. Because whatever any meet with in the way of sin, is really designed for warning to others, as is clear from the text. See *1 Cor. x. 11. 12.* And they that will not be taught by the example of others, may expect to be made examples to teach others, as *Lot's* wife was. But the wise will have their eyes in their head, while impenitent sinners pass on and perish, as those that will not take warning. Hence it comes to pass, that the stroke afar off not prevailing, is oftentimes brought nearer home.

4. lastly, Because all those strokes which sinners meet with in this life, are the spittings of the shower of wrath that abides the impenitent world, after which the full shower may certainly be looked for. As the joys in believing are the pledges of eternal joy, flowing from one fountain with it ; the first-fruits of *Canaan's* land, which will be followed with the full harvest : so all the outlettings of God's wrath on sinners here, are the pledges of eternal wrath, and first-fruits of hell, which will be followed with the harvest of misery, being the same in kind, *Rev. xx. 14.*

Use. 1. Be not unconcerned spectators of all the effects of God's anger for sin going abroad in the world ; for your part

part and mine is deep in them. There is none of them but says to us, as in the same condemnation, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* O how unconcernedly do many look on the miseries of others, how far are they from taking a lesson to themselves therefrom! But a hard heart and seared conscience, which cannot be awakened by the dispensations of providence far off from them, do but invite the heavy stroke to fall on themselves.

2. Consider, O impenitent sinners, how can ye escape, when your ruin is insured by so many pledges thereof from the Lord's hand, while ye go on in sin? When a sinner goes out of God's way, he leaves his soul in pawn for his return by repentance; but the impenitent sinner never returns to loose his pawn, and so loses it. When God lets out any of his wrath in any measure on the children of men, that is God's pawn for his bringing eternal wrath on the impenitent; and we may be sure, that however careless we be of our pawns, God will not lose his. Therefore consider your ways, and repent.

Obf. 3. *The strokes that others meet with, are loud calls to us to repent.* That is the language of all the afflicting providences which we see going in the world. To confirm this, consider,

1. God does not strike one for sin with a visible stroke, but with an eye to all. The reason which God gives in his law for punishing of some transgressors severely, is, that *all Israel might hear, and fear, and do no such thing.* In the infancy of the *Jewish* church, he consumed *Nadab* and *Abihu* with fire, *Lev. x. 2.* compared with *vers. 9.* In the infancy of the *Christian* church, *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were struck dead for a lye. Why all this, but to be a warning to all that should come after?

2. Thereby we may see how dangerous a thing sin is to be harboured; and if we will look inward, we may ever see, that there is sin in us also against the God of *Israel.* If we saw one stung by a serpent which he had taken up, would not we quickly throw away one which we had taken up too, lest we should fare no better? How can we think to prosper in that way, where we see it goes so very ill with others?

Use. 1. We may see that none go on impenitently in a sinful course, but over the belly of thousands of calls from Providence to repent, besides all those they have from the word. Look abroad into the world, O sinner, and consider how

how many have fallen into ruin, and are still falling by their iniquity. As many as there are of these, so many mouths are there calling thee to repent, and turn from thy sin. *Who did ever harden himself against God, and prosper?* And dost thou think, that thy case shall be an exception to the general rule? No; so many witnesses give their testimony to thee, *That except thou repent, thou shalt likewise perish.*

2. Impenitency under the gospel cannot have the least shadow of excuse. The calls of Providence common to the whole world, are sufficient to leave the very heathens without excuse, *Rom. i. 20.*: how much more shall the calls of the word and Providence too make us inexcusable, if we do not repent? Sinners make many shifts for themselves, to preserve the life of their lusts, and to keep themselves from this unpleasant exercise: but they will be but fig-leaf covers before the Lord.

3. How much more do strokes from the hand of the Lord on ourselves call us to repent? *Hos. ii. 6. 7. Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.* What Absalom's design was in burning Joab's corn-field, is the design of afflicting providences. And therefore impenitency and hardness of heart under the strokes of the Lord's hand, is highly aggravated, *Jer. v. 3.* Every cross that we meet with, is a charge from heaven to turn from our sinful course, and from the particular ills of our way.

I come now to the principal doctrine of the text.

DOCT. *Sinners, except they repent, shall perish.* This is an except without any exception. Be who they will, if they be sinners, they must repent or perish. All are sinners, and by sin depart from God; and they must come back again to him by repentance, else they are for ever ruined. Be they sinners of a greater or lesser size, they must be penitent sinners, or it had been better for them they had never been born.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Explain the nature of repentance.

II. Apply.

I. J

I. *I shall explain the nature of repentance.* And here we may consider,

1. What it is in its general nature.
2. How it is wrought in the soul.
3. The subject of true repentance.
4. The parts of repentance.

FIRST, We may consider *what repentance is in its general nature.* It is a saving grace: *2 Tim. ii. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.* It is a grace given us of God freely, enabling and disposing a soul to all the acts of turning from sin unto God; and it is saving, as in its own nature distinguishing a man from a hypocrite, and having a sure connection with eternal salvation. To unfold this more particularly, consider,

1. It is not a transient action, as *Papists* and some ignorant creatures imagine, as if a sigh for sin, an act of sorrow for it, a confession of it with a *God be merciful to me a sinner*, were repentance. No, no; these may be acts of repentance while they proceed from a truly penitent heart. But repentance itself is not a passing act, but an abiding grace, *Zech. xii. 10.*; a continuing frame and disposition of the soul; a principle lying deep in the heart, disposing a man to mourn for and turn from sin on all occasions.

2. It is not a passing work of the first days of one's religion, as some professors take it to be; but a grace in the heart, setting one to an answerable working all the days of his life. It is a spring of waters of sorrow in the heart for sin, which will spring up there while sin is there, though sometimes through hardness of heart it may be stopped for a while. They that look on repentance as the first stage in the way to heaven, and looking back to the sorrowful hours which they had when the Lord first began to deal with them, reckon that they have passed the first stage, are in a dangerous condition. And who so endeavour not to carry on their repentance, I doubt if they ever at all repented yet. As when *Moses* had smote the rock in the wilderness, and the waters began to gush out, those waters ran (it is thought, *1 Cor. x. 4.*) and followed them while in the wilderness: so the heart first smitten with repentance for sin at the soul's first conversion to God, the wound still bleeds, and is never bound up to bleed no more, till the band of glory be put about it in heaven, *Rev. xxi. 4.*

Hence

Hence initial and progressive repentance, though the former be the repentance of a sinner, the latter of a saint, are no more different kinds of repentance, than the soul's virgin love to Christ, and their love to him through the course of their spiritual marriage with him; or than faith, in its first, and after actings. But as the mid-day and evening sun are the same with the morning sun, so are these; though the rising morning sun may be most noticed by the traveller, who having travelled in the night, was thereby brought from darkness to light.

3. It is not a common grace, but a special saving one. Men may have a repentance for their sin, gnawing their consciences, and tormenting their hearts, which they will carry on in hell through eternity; being only the first movings of the worm in the soul that never dieth: as *Judas's* repentance seems to have been, *Simon Magus's*, and *Pharaoh's*. They may bitterly rue their sin, as *Esaú*, *Gen. xxvii. 34.* who never truly repent of it, *Heb. xii. 17.*; and the stony heart may be broken in a thousand pieces, while yet every piece remains a stone. They may have a superficial sorrow for sin, and a light joy succeeding it, whose hearts were never pierced to the quick; and therefore the joy goes, as the effects of a scud of rain on the parched ground; *Matth. xiii. 20. 21.* But true repentance is a repentance never repented of, kindly working in the soul.

SECONDLY, We may consider *how repentance is wrought in the soul.* And here two questions must be answered, and two points cleared, namely,

1. Who works repentance, or is the author of it? And that is the sanctifying Spirit of Jesus Christ: *Zech. xii. 10.* *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.* Sometimes notorious prodigals become true penitents; as a persecuting *Saul* turned to be a preaching *Paul*: so that the world is amazed with the change, and are ready to say as in *Saul's* case, *1 Sam. x. 11.* *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?* But that query, *vers. 12.* *But who is their father?* gives a rational account of the matter. All sort of timber to divine grace is alike easy to hew. And forasmuch as the house of God is ordinarily built of the knottiest wood,

publicans and harlots entering into the kingdom of God before scribes and Pharisees, it may plainly appear, that repentance is not the work of nature, but of grace; not of mens own spirit, but Christ's Spirit.

This is evident from the word, *Jer. xiii. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* It is the Lord's own work to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.* It is the office of the exalted Mediator to give repentance, in whose hand it is to send the Spirit, *Acts v. 31.* Ministers may preach repentance, but cannot work it in themselves, and far less in others. They may sow the seed, but cannot make it grow, *1 Cor. iii. 6. 7.* It is but a peradventure if God give repentance, when they have done their utmost, *2 Tim. ii. 25.* But if at all their weapons be mighty, it is through God, *2 Cor. x. 4.*

2. By what means does the Spirit work repentance? That is by the word, whether read or preached. The word is the channel wherein the influences of the Spirit flow; and from these it has its piercing, melting, and heart-softening virtue, as the pool of *Bethesda* had its healing virtue from the angel's troubling of the water: *Acts xi. 20. 21. And some of them were men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* Junius, who was deeply plunged in Atheism, was brought to repentance by reading *John i.* in a New Testament which his father had purposedly laid down in his chamber, if perhaps he might take it up and read it. *Augustine* was converted by reading *Rom. xiii. 13. 14. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Three thousand we find were wrought on by one sermon, *Acts ii.*

Many and various are the occasions of repentance, which the Lord blesteth for bringing home the word to the soul, and the soul by it unto God. Personal afflictions have been so in the case of many, *Hos. ii. 7.* The sight of strokes on others has been blessed to some. The first occasion of *Luther's* turning serious, was a fright by the violent death of a dear companion of his. Nay, God has made falls into gross

sins occasions of repentance unto many, whereof there are several instances, as *Achan*, the thief on the cross, &c. *Flavel* gives an account of one in the case of an attempt of self-murder. *Augustine* heard a voice, saying, *Take up, and read.* Nay, God can make a dream in the night such an occasion, *Job xxxiii. 15. 16.* But these are not properly the means, but the occasions which bring men to consider of the word, which is the true and proper means. And here the Spirit of the Lord makes use of both parts of the word.

1st, The law, to break the hard heart : *Jer. xxiii. 29. Is not my word—like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? saith the Lord.* It goes before like *John Baptist* to prepare the way of the Lord into the heart. And the Spirit of the Lord making use of it in a soul, is called *the Spirit of bondage*, *Rom. viii. 15.* And here each part of the law has its proper use.

(1.) The commands of it, to convince the soul of sin : *Rom. vii. 7.—I had not known sin, (says the Apostle), but by the law : for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* The commands of the law, held forth to the soul in their spirituality and vast extent, are the looking-glass wherein the sinner is made to see his black face, the sins and sinfulness of his nature, heart, and life, which he must repent of.

(2.) The threatenings of it, to convince the soul of judgment : *Gal. iii. 10. As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse : for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* These carried home on the soul, disturb its rest in sin, and let the man see that he has been sleeping within the sea-mark of divine vengeance, and so give him a frightful wakening. These discover the danger of sin for time and eternity, and tell him that he must turn over a new leaf, else he is ruined.

2dly, The gospel, to melt the hard heart, like a fire, *Jer. xxiii. 29. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord :* and so to bow and bend it from sin towards God, *Zech. xii. 10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.* Thus the soul that was driven by the law, is kindly led and drawn by the gospel to repentance.

The law serves to make a terrible reel in the conscience and affections; but the gospel is Christ's key to open the heart, and to turn about the will, that he may come in, *Gal. iii. 2.* The stormy wind, and earthquake, may go before in the law; but the still small voice of the gospel is that which the Lord is in. This is evident, if ye consider,

(1.) That repentance is the doctrine of the gospel. I do indeed think, that it cannot be denied but that the law requires repentance as a duty, in so far as it binds the apostate sinner to return to God: but in the mean time it gives no hope of mercy to the penitent, seeing its constant voice is, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* But the gospel brings the glad tidings of place for repentance, and shews how the apostate creature returning will be accepted. And there can be no true returning to God, where there is no hope of acceptance.

(2.) Repentance is a promise of the covenant of grace: *Ezek xxxvi. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* It is not only the duty of God's elect, but their privilege, made over to them in Jesus Christ, purchased by his death, and bestowed on them by virtue of his exaltation, *Acts v. 31.* And hence, as one of the benefits of that covenant, it is sealed in baptism, *Mark i. 4.*

The sum of what is said on this second head, is, That repentance is an evangelical softness of heart, and bent of spirit to turn away from sin, and to turn to God, wrought in a soul by the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of holiness being given to Christ without measure, he puts the same Spirit in his elect in the day of his power; who by his grace melts the heart for sin, and bends it away from sin to holiness.

Use. 1. Repentance is not a man's taking up himself, in the point of his outward conversation. It is one thing to reform the life, another to reform the heart, by changing the will. The former is within the reach of mere nature, the other is not to be effected but by a supernatural hand, *Jer. xxxi. 18.* The former may make one a painted sepulchre, the latter makes him a new creature.

2. Legal repentance is no true repentance: and therefore though one have it, he may perish; as *Pharaoh, Judas, &c.* It makes a sinful restless conscience under the terror of

God's

God's wrath, but mean while it leaves a hard heart, glewed to sin. The law and its terrors coming into a sinful soul, may raise the dust ready to choke the sinner, as in a house when a-sweeping; but it will never be made clean, unless the gospel have its efficacy on the heart, as the water which lays that dust. Hence it comes to pass, that sinners sometimes have sharp convictions, but mean while their lusts grow as rampant as ever after.

3. See the folly of delaying repentance, and not striking in with the motions of the Spirit, when one has them. How do people put off repentance from time to time, as if it were wholly in their power to do it at any time! But they that cannot command wind and tide, have need to fall in with them while they serve, lest if they go, they be left hopeless. O delay not, lest the Spirit of the Lord be provoked to depart.

4. *lastly*, Learn whom ye are to look to for repentance. It is the work of the Lord's Spirit; and unto him ye are to look for his grace to loose the bands of wickedness, to soften the hard heart, and to turn you to himself, *Jer. xxxi. 18.*

THIRDLY, We may consider *the subject of true repentance, what it is.* It is a convinced believing soul. An unconvinced sinner cannot be a true penitent; for what the eye sees not, the heart rues not. Neither can an unbelieving sinner be so; for without faith the heart may be rent for sin, but not from it.

First, The soul wherein true repentance is wrought, is a convinced soul: *Job xxxvi. 9. 10. He sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. Acts ii. 37. 38. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* The first particular work in the creation was making light; and the letting in a new light by conviction, is the first work in the new creation. God begins his work, where Satan ends his; who having got the soul asleep in the arms of its lusts, shuts the windows, and draws the curtains, that it may sleep sound, till it awaken in hell. But the Spirit of

of the Lord by conviction opens them, and awakens the sinner ordinarily, if not always, in a fright. Here consider,

1. How this conviction is wrought. It is done by the erecting of a criminal court within the sinner's own breast, which the man cannot absent himself from, more than he can go out of himself. He must stay and answer, unless he prevail with the judge to let fall the process; as, alas! many do by silencing their consciences one way or other to their own ruin. And in this court,

1st, The Spirit of the Lord, awakening the sleepy conscience, sets it upon the bench, so that the man becomes his own judge: *John xvi. 8. And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* The man searches and tries his own heart and life, which was before neglected as the sluggard's garden. But now every corner thereof is ransacked, and secret things set in the light.

2^{dly}, The man is convicted as a sinner by the law. His nature, heart, and life brought to the holy law and compared with it, he is found evidently to be guilty and a transgressor. Hence says the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 9. I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* The law as a looking-glass is held before his eyes, and he sees his spots. His own conscience is as a thousand witnesses against him, and he cannot deny the charge. So his mouth is stopped, and his sin at length has found him out, *Rom. iii. 19.*

3^{dly}, The man is sentenced and condemned by his own conscience according to the law, adjudging him liable to death, eternal death, for his sins: *Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* He is therefore a condemned malefactor in his own eyes, by the sentence of the law pronounced against him. Consider,

2. The effects of this conviction; which are these.

1st, A painful sense of sin, an affecting sight of it, *Rom. vii. 9.* forecited. For now the sore is lanced; and they see those sins, and that in sin, which they saw not before; and their eyes affect their hearts. As when the sun shines into a house, the motes are discovered, which did not before appear: so is it here. And the sin which sat light on them before, becomes a burden too heavy to them to bear; for now they are roused out of their lethargy, and feel their sores. It is a burden on their spirits, which sinks them;

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on their backs, that bows them down; on their heads, which they are not able to discharge themselves of. Therefore the soul coming to Christ, is represented as a man with a burden on him: *Psal. lv. 22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* *Hos. xiv. 2. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquity;* *Heb. Lift off iniquity as a burden.*

2dly, Terror on their hearts: *Psal. ix. 20. Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men.* The convinced jailor, a man who wore a sword, falls a-trembling, *Acts xvi. 29.* for the terror of God is too high for the stoutest heart, that knows not what it is to fear the face of man. The soul that was fearless before, because blind to its own hazard, now that his eyes are opened, is *magor missabib*. For what heart can be strong before an angry God, brandishing the sword of a fiery law over the conscience, which awakened, is the tenderest part of the man?

3dly, Legal sorrow for sin: *Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.* There are sounds of grief that go through their hearts like arrows, *Psal. xlv. 5.*; and these are very piercing, *Prov. xviii. 14. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?* The man sees now that he has been murdering his own soul, and he groans out an elegy over his dead self; which is raised the higher, that he thought his soul was alive, when really it was dead. He calls himself fool and beast for doing as he did. But what is very sad, though his heart be rent in pieces for his sin, yet it is not rent from it. What grieves him thus, is purely selfish; his separation from God, without whom he sees he cannot be happy; and his liableness to his wrath and curse, which he sees will ruin him for ever to lie under.

4thly, A racking anxiety how to be delivered out of this state: *Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard this, they—said,—What shall we do?* And here many times fear and hope take their several turns in his anxious soul; sometimes hoping, sometimes desponding, like *Jonah* in the whale's belly, *Jon. ii. 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.* Conviction of sin will make way for care into the most careless head, and will make folk bestow many thoughts on the neglected salvation, that used not to bestow one serious thought upon the business.

ness. And this care will swallow up all others, as that of a drowning man to save his life.

Use. 1. The unconvinced sinner is an impenitent sinner. Harken ye young ones, and old, that have lived at ease, and with a hale heart, in respect of your souls state, all your days. They may sleep sound indeed, whom the devil is rocking in the cradle of a natural impenitent state. But ye will get a wakening yet, either in time to bring you to repentance, or when time is gone, and there is no more place for repentance, *Jer. xlviii. 11. 12. For except ye repent, ye shall—perish.* Ah poor sinner, thou wast never yet in the next step to repentance. Thy fore has not been lanced yet, therefore surely the filthy matter is never yet cast out by repentance.

2. Convictions and legal qualms of conscience are not repentance; for they do but qualify the subject for it, and that in part only. These are very necessary things I have spoke of under this head: but they are but like the unripe fruit, which must be ripened by the work of the gospel on the heart, and brought to a perfection by the warm sun of gospel-influences, ere he that has them can be accounted a penitent indeed. Or rather, they are like the blossoms which go before, and differ in kind from the fruit, which often fall off, and no fruit follows at all. Folk may have had these many days and years since, that never repented to this day, *Hos. vi. 4.* The first-fruits of the second death may be mistaken by many for the pangs of the new birth. And therefore ye that have had them, consider well what issue they have had; for it is not enough to have been in them, but to have got right out of them. Wrong curing of some diseases, breeds others, that prove mortal to many.

The right issue out of them lies in three things.

1. It lies in self-denial, or unselfing of the soul, when the soul is shaken out of itself for justification, and sanctification too: *Jer. xxxi. 18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Compared with vers. 19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* They see the heinousness of sin, and the corruption of their nature too, so as they conclude

conclude themselves utterly unable to help themselves in either of these points, and so come off from themselves.

2. It lies in faith, or believing; in coming to Jesus Christ for all, in point of justification and sanctification too: *If. xlv. 24. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* The soul being turned off its own bottom, comes and builds on him for what it wants, and looks to him for his blood and Spirit. Thus *the law is a school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith, Gal. iii. 24.* See *Jer. iii. 22. 23.*

3. It lies in repentance, or a kindly melting of the heart for sin, *Jer. xxxi. 18. Zech. xii. 10.* as done against a gracious God, whom the heart is knit to in love. The soul comes from before the throne of justice, where it stood weeping for itself and its own misery, unto before the throne of grace, where it stands weeping for having offended such a gracious Father.

They land at this threefold shore, who come rightly out of these depths. But many plunge up and down in them a while, and land again just in the same side they went in at. Some land at the shore,

1. Of formality, or a legal walk, *2 Tim. iii. 5. having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* They change their former way, but retain their old heart. They go indeed to religious duties, but they never go out of them to Christ. They act not as they did; but still they have the old principle of action, acting from self, and to self; so that though they change their work, they still work to the old master. And thus many continue in a profession of religion, living on their duties, never coming to Christ. Others land at the shore,

2. Of their former security. They are neither better inwardly nor outwardly; but they come from out of their qualms of conscience, as one out of a fever, returning just to their old way of living; as was the case with Felix, *Acts xxiv. 25. who said to Paul, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* Others land at the shore,

3. Of profanity; turning worse than before: *Matth. xii. 43. 44. 45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself se-*

ven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there : and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Their lusts dammed up for a while, run with more vigour than ever thereafter.

Secondly, The soul wherein repentance is wrought, is a believing soul. Faith is the spring and source of repentance ; so that though the grace of faith and repentance are given together and at once in respect of time, yet, in the order of nature, faith goes before repentance, and the acting of faith goes before the exercise of repentance. And he that would repent, must first believe in Christ that he may repent. I know that some teach otherwise. But this is the doctrine of the Scriptures and our Catechism. To confirm it, consider,

1. That faith is absolutely the leading grace, and the first breathing of a quickened soul ; *Heb. xi. 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God ;* therefore it is impossible to repent, for that is very pleasing to him, *Jer. xxxi. 20.* So *John xv. 5. Without me, i. e. separate from me, and there is no union with him but by the Spirit of faith, ye can do nothing acceptable to God, therefore ye cannot repent.*

2. It is particularly the leading grace to repentance : *Zech. xii. 10.—They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son.* Thus it is represented in fact, *Acts. xi. 21.—And a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* If repentance be the emptying of the soul by the dropping of the tears of godly sorrow, it is faith that generates them in the heart. It is faith that melts the hard heart, which drop-peth in repentance. The eye of faith fixes on God in Christ, and then the soul turns to him by repentance, *Jer. iii. 22.*

3. The scripture usually proposeth the objects of faith, and promises of grace, for motives to repentance ; thereby discovering, that it is by a believing application of these, that a soul is brought to repentance : *Jer. iii. 14. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. vers. 22. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings : behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* *Joel ii. 12. 13. Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God : for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*

Hos. vi. 1. *Come and let us return unto the Lord : for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.* Chap. xiv. 1. *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* Nay the very law proclaimed on mount Sinai with so much terror, is graciously prefaced with gospel-grace for faith to work on in the first place ; *I am the Lord thy God, &c.* And thus the doctrine of the New Testament concerning repentance is proposed to sinners, *Matth. iii. 2. and iv. 17. Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

4. *lastly,* The nature of repentance plainly teacheth this. It is a cordial turning from sin unto God : but is it possible to turn to God, but through Christ ? *John xiv. 6. I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* And is there any way of coming to Christ, but by faith ? The soul then that would turn and go to God again by repentance, must needs take Christ (by faith) by the way. The people indeed wept ; but did they put away the strange wives, or set to it, till *Shechaniah* cried, *Ezra x. 2. We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives, of the people of the land : yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing ?* They must not be only prisoners of fear, but of hope, that will turn, *Zech. ix. 12. Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.* Repentance is a kindly humiliation and mourning for sin ; but the faithless heart may roar under law-horror, will never kindly mourn but under gospel-influences.

Object. Repentance is placed before faith, *Mark i. 15.* ; and sometimes repentance only is mentioned to natural men as the way to salvation, as in our text, and *Acts ii. 38. and iii. 19. Ans.* (1.) Repentance no doubt is absolutely necessary to salvation ; and no man needs pretend to faith, that does not repent, for they are inseparable. But that will no more infer the precedency of repentance to faith, than that *Heb. xii. 14.* will infer the precedency of holiness to it. Now, this is all our text aims at. (2.) Repentance being the end, and faith the means to that end, no wonder they be so placed : for the end is first in one's intention, yet the means are first in practice. So *Mark i. 15.* Christ commands sinners to *repent* ; but then in order to repenting, he commands them to *believe*. So *Acts ii. 38.* *believing* is implied in the command to be *baptized*. And therefore, speaking of the result of this work, *vers. 44.* it is said, *And all that believed, &c.* So *Acts iii. 19.* it is implied in

being converted; compared with *Heb. iii. 12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* And that this is the true reason of this way of speaking, namely, that repentance is the end, and faith the means, is clear from *Acts xx. 21. Testifying—repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:* for that scripture can bear no other meaning, without destroying that fundamental truth, That Christ is the way to the Father. John preached repentance, *Mark i. 4.*; but how did he direct them to it? *Acts xix. 4. John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

Use. 1. Then it is not gospel-doctrine, That Christ will receive none but true penitents, or that none but such have a warrant to embrace Christ by faith: *Rev. xxii. 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* The evil of this doctrine is, that it sets sinners to spin repentance out of their own bowels, and to fetch it with them to Christ, instead of coming to him by faith to get it. And it hinders sensible sinners from coming to Christ, as keeping them back till they be persuaded that they have true repentance. I say, persuaded; for how can a sinner come to Christ till he be persuaded he has a warrant so to do? If Christ will receive none but such as have true repentance, then none other are invited to come; for surely those that are invited, will be welcome upon their coming: if none other be invited, then impenitent sinners are not bound to come to Christ; for none are bound to come, but those that are invited; for *where there is no law, there is no transgression.* However, none are here in Christ by faith, but thereupon they become true penitents; and none but true penitents will see heaven.

2. Then for sensible sinners to think that they dare not and ought not to believe, and embrace Christ, till they be more deeply humbled, and do more thoroughly repent of their sins, and, in a word, be more fit to receive him, is but a gilded deceit, and a trick of the false heart, to make the soul stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, and die there at length. The scripture holdeth forth quite other doctrine: *Rev. iii. 20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door,*

door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. *Is. lv. 1.* Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. It is one thing what a sinner will do; another, what he may and ought to do. It is very true, there are many who will never come to Christ, if they be not made more sensible of their need of him than they are. But all that hear the gospel may and ought to come, be their case what it will; and those that come not, will be condemned for their not coming, *John iii. 19.* Therefore let every sensible sinner under that temptation think, that he is in the case of a drowning man, who if he stand disputing whether he may catch hold of the rope reached to him to hale him to land, a wave may come and sweep him away; and therefore without disputing he must take hold of it.

3. This shews the true way to deal with a hard heart, to soften it, and bring it to hearty repentance. It is to believe. Ye must do like those fowls, that first fly up, and then come down on their prey; first soar aloft in the way of believing, and then come down in true humiliation: *Zech. xii. 10.*—*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.* One may otherwise toil long in vain with a hard heart. Unbelief will lock up the heart, as the waters are with a hard frost; for hard thoughts of God set the soul at a distance more and more from him, when the believing of the proclaimed pardon touches the rebels hearts, and makes them come in.

4. *lastly,* The more faith the more repentance; as the fuller the spring is, the streams run with the more vigorous current. *According to your faith be it unto you,* is the rule of the dispensation of grace. For faith is the provisor for all other graces, as being the conduit-pipe by which grace comes from the fountain of grace to the soul; so that it failing, all fails; and it moving vigorously, the rest do so too.

Quest. How are we to act faith in order to repentance?

Ans. 1. Firmly believe, that whatever your guilt be, God is reconcilable to you in Christ Jesus; that there is hope of your case, if ye can attain to the way laid out for bettering it. You have God's word for this: *Is. i. 18.* Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll. *Ezek. xviii. 23.* Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord

Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live? This will quicken your endeavours after the happiness of your souls. Satan strikes at this foundation, to keep the soul from repentance, many ways. He will tell you, it cannot be thought, that God can ever love the like of you. But the Lord saith the contrary: *Hos. xiv. 4. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.* Again, Satan will tell you, that you were not elected, but made for destruction; though God never set him nor you on the secrets of his decrees: *Deut. xxix. 29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us.* But why does he tell you all this, but to make you careless? which being done, he knows you cannot repent.

2. Believe that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save you from sin and from wrath. You have ground to believe his ability: *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* *Heb. vii. 25. He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* And you have also ground to believe his willingness: *Is. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.* both forecited. This will set you a step further on; and truly this being believed by a sensible sinner, the bargain is almost closed. Therefore Satan works against the tossed soul's believing of this, to the end he may not come to an anchor or rest, but may plunge up and down in the depths, knowing no landing place. Hence these hellish suggestions, What have you to do with the promises of grace? they will be made out to others, but not to you. But see *Acts ii. 39.* compared with *vers. 36.* Hence also the suggestion of having sinned the unpardonable sin. But why is that sin unpardonable? not that the Physician cannot or will not cure it, *Heb. vii. 25. John vi. 37.*; but because the sinner will never after desire to come to him, but wilfully and maliciously rejects him. Hence also that suggestion, that Christ died not for him. But surely Satan never saw the roll of those whom Christ died for, and knows it no more than we, *Deut. xxix. 29.* forecited. We ought not to call that in question, but leave that matter to the Lord. It is plain, that we are *commanded to believe*, *1 John iii. 23.* Let us do so, and we shall have evidences that Christ died for us.

3. Christ has given his consent to be yours in his word; believe it; and do you consent to be his, accepting of the covenant, and of Christ therein to be your head and husband.

Take

Take him in all his offices as offered ; and solemnly lay the whole weight of your soul, for justification and sanctification, on him. Lay over the burden of your guilt on his blood, of your raging lusts on his blood and Spirit ; confidently trusting in him for salvation from sin and wrath. You have good ground to do this : *Matth. xxii. 4. All things are ready : come unto the marriage.* *Is. xxvi. 3. 4. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee : because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever : for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.* Chap. xlv. 5. *One shall say, I am the Lord's : and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob : and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* Chap. xlv. 24. *Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* This being done, the bargain is closed for time and eternity ; Christ is yours, and ye are his, and God is your God in him. Satan strives against the soul here ; for he knows, that if this be done, the person is no more his. Hence are these suggestions, Christ is a hard master there is no living with ; though Christ says the contrary, *Matth. xi. 28. 29. 30.* Again, it is over soon for that serious work, *Psal. xcv.* If none of these nor the like will do, then he will tell the person, that it is presumption for him to offer at any such thing. But that is but the devil's doctrine, that it is presumption to do it, since God has commanded it, *1 John iii. 23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* And do what ye will, ye cannot please God unless you do it, *John vi. 29. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* *Heb. xi. 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God.* Well, if the soul will venture, he is ready to tell him, he had as good let it alone as try it in vain, for Christ will never receive him, nor give his consent to the bargain. But Satan is a lyar ; for he has given it already : *Matth. xxii. 4. All things are ready : come unto the marriage.* *Hos. ii. 19. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.* The soul is like a traveller come to a deep water-side, over which lies a bridge appearing very thin and narrow ; it is pouring on rain on this side, it is fair weather on the far side ; he would fain be over ; and while he is minding to take the bridge, a false friend tells him, that he will never get over, that the bridge will break with him, or that his foot will slip,

slip, &c. And thus the poor man stands, sometimes putting on his foot, sometimes drawing it back again, till the flood rising behind him, he sees he must venture or perish. So he ventures with a trembling heart, and gets safe over, and sees that it was an enemy that made him so distrustful of the passage.

4. This being done, believe that Christ is yours, *Cant. ii. 16.*; that God is reconciled to you in him; that your sins are pardoned for Christ's sake, and you are no more under condemnation for them, *Rom. viii. 1.*; that you are now in a state of peace with God, and safe under the covert of blood. This will effectually melt your hearts into sincere repentance. And the stronger your confidence be in this point, the fire will be the more keen to melt the soul. Satan will oppose you in this also, that raising the dust of doubts and fears, your hands may be feeble that should fight against your lusts, the legs weak and trembling wherewith ye should turn from sin unto God. But the more he weakens that, the more he serves his own purpose against you.

5. Stand upon this shore, and look to your sins, and Saviour, *Zech. xii. 10.* When a soul has, by a believing application of the blood of Christ, passed the gulf of condemnation, and sees itself safe on the other side, it stands fairest for a hearty melting for sin, and a free and cordial turning from it unto God, *Luke vii. 37. 38.* compared with *vers. 47.* It is slavish fear that may be greater before, but it is filial relenting that will be greatest then. The waters of sorrow may make greater noise before, but they will come sweeping down with a more full flood then, as when a hearty thaw comes after a long frost.

6. *lastly*, Believing the promise of his grace, use the means. There are means of God's appointment to stir up a soul to repentance; namely, serious meditations on the sins of our nature, heart, lip, and life; the evil of it with respect to God, and to ourselves, &c. *Rev. ii. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.* *Psal. cxix. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* There are promises of repentance, *Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* *Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* To believe the promise without use of the means, is presumption;

tion; to use the means without believing the promise, is a selfish un sanctified work. What God has joined, either of these puts asunder, and so must be fruitless. God says to us in this case, as unto *Moses*, *Exod. xviii. 5, 6.* Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. The means are as the rock, the faith of the promise the rod of God; the way to get the water was by smiting the rock with the rod.

FOURTHLY, Let us consider the parts of repentance. These are two, namely, humiliation for sin, and turning from sin unto God. These two put together, make up true repentance. Accordingly the scripture speaks of repenting of sin, *2 Cor. xii. 21.*—*which have not repented of the uncleanness, &c.*; and likewise repenting from sin, *Heb. vi. 1.*—*not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, &c.* So in the Old Testament repentance is expressed by two words; the one denoting remorse and sorrow, *Job xlii. 6.* Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. *Jer. viii. 6.* No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? the other denoting the turning of the soul, viz. from sin unto God, *Ezek. xviii. 30.* Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions.

But however these may be distinguished, they cannot be divided in true repentance. The true humiliation issues always in turning; and turning always begins at humiliation. Hence very often the whole of repentance is expressed by returning, and sometimes by humiliation, as *Lev. xxvi. 41.* If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity. *2 Chron. xxxiii. 12.* And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. We have both together, *Joel ii. 12, 13.* Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

1ST, To begin with humiliation. This leads the van in the sinner's return to God by repentance. There is never a soul comes back to God, but it comes the low way of hu-

miliation. The sinner gone from God, is set up against him: but grace pulls down the sinner from that seat, and lays him down at the Lord's footstool, where the Lord takes him up: *1 Pet. v. 6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* As it was with *Benhadad's* servants, *1 Kings xx. 31. 32.*; so it is with the convinced sinner: faith teaches them, that the King of *Israel* is a merciful King; repentance girds sackcloth on their loins, and ropes on their heads, and in that posture brings them to him. Now, in this humiliation of the soul there are these five things.

First, A kindly sense of sin, whereby the soul sees and is deeply affected with its sins against a holy, gracious God. I call it so, to distinguish it from the legal convictions spoken of before, which make a terrible reel in the conscience and affections; whereas this kindly soaks into the heart. The former is at the bottom involuntary, comes in, and is kept on against the sinner's will; because the natural enmity of the heart against God is not broken; and makes the man like one under great pain, who would fain sleep, but still the new stounds awake him, and keep him awake. The latter is voluntary, it is welcome in, and welcome to stay; because the heart is brought low, and would fain be lower before a holy God. When the light appears at a chink, they would fain draw the curtains, and open the windows, that they may get a better sight of their black face and foul hands, *Jer. iii. 18. 19.* This sense of sin,

1. For the matter of it, is,

1st, A sense of the plague of the heart, or sin of the nature, *1 Kings viii. 38. Rom. vii. 7. 8.* The man that is humbled, sees the corruption of his nature, himself to be a mass of corruption and confusion. He discerns the bias of his heart to the wrong side, the aversion to good, the proneness to evil, that is interwoven with his very nature. The light of the Lord shining into his soul, gives him the affecting sight of the distortion and pravity that is in all the faculties of his soul, the blindness in his mind, rebellion in his will, and carnality in his affections. The want of this is a flaw in the repentance of many, of whom we may say, as *Lev. xiii. 44. He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head.* They never see the corruption of their nature, and so repent not of it.

2dly, A sense of actual sins: *Job xxxvi. 9. Then he shew-*

eth

eth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. These are the poisonous streams flowing from the impoisoned fountain: *Mark vii. 21. 22. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.* Sin now lies at the door; for those things that were buried out of sight, have a resurrection, and stand before him as an exceeding great army which he has mustered against Heaven. Sins committed many years before, will appear more fresh and green than that day they were committed. What he justified before as no faults, he will be now ashamed of; and what were reckoned tolerable follies, will be accounted monstrous impieties.

3dly, A sense of the particular idol of jealousy, which the man has been most apt to be led away with. The soul is never truly humbled, till deeply sensible of its weak side: *Hos. xiv. 3. Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods.* For the penitent will be particularly set against that, as what is particularly offensive to God, *Psal. xviii. 22.* This right eye smarts and pains him so exceedingly, that now he would gladly have it plucked out. And as it does especially grieve the Lord's Spirit, it specially grieves his, as what has been the great make-bate betwixt God and him.

4thly, A sense of the numerousness and multitude of their sins: *Job xiii. 23. How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.* A true sense of sin will open mens eyes to see innumerable evils compassing them about, countable only by him who telleth the stars, *Psal. xix. 12.* Hence the humbled soul is sensible of a cloud of guilt that it has been wrapt up in; and will see it must plead guilty to every line of the spiritual law: sees itself a mass of iniquity; *from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.* *Il. lxiv. 6. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, &c.*

5thly, A sense of the hainousness of their sins, the aggravating circumstances wherewith they have been attended: *Luke xv. 18. I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* Each sin pierces the heart of the penitent. And so it is wonderful to see what a dexterity a re-

penitent sinner has in aggravating of his sins, in his prayers and complaints. Time, place, person, and each circumstance, shoots as it were a dart through the liver.

Lastly, A sense of the evil of sin. Men may see sin, that see not the evil of it. Hence professing of sin, instead of confessing it; turning to it, instead of turning from it. But if one saw the serpent's sting, he would not take it into his bosom, *Luke xxiii. 34.* But the Lord's language to the soul whom he is drawing to repentance, is that, *Jer. ii. 19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.* And there is a twofold evil in sin, which the soul is now sensible of.

(1.) The evil of it with respect to themselves. They are sensible of the bitter fruits of sin: *Rom. vi. 21. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.* They see now the vine is the vine of Sodom, the grapes are grapes of gall, the clusters bitter, and their teeth are set on edge. They cry out, as the sons of the prophets in another case, *2 Kings iv. 40. O thou man of God, there is death in the pot.* This is the danger of sin, that they are made sensible of. They see the guilt of it, laying the soul open to temporal, spiritual, and eternal strokes: *Jer. xiv. 7. O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.* Hence horror takes hold on them, because of God's righteous judgments. They are made to wonder that they are not in hell, drinking the cup of the wrath of God. Their hearts tremble to look back on the ruin that was hanging over their heads in their natural state; that the poisonous cup which they drank, has not dispatched them. Hence they fear to meddle with sin again, as one would do to take a serpent into his bosom.

(2.) The evil of it with respect to God and Christ; and that in a threefold respect. [1.] As contrary to the holy law of God: *1 John iii. 4. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* By sin one breaks over the hedge, yea, breaks it down, and so steps into the devil's ground; what wonder then a serpent do bite him! Now the sinner sees the equity of God's law, and so plainly perceives the evil of transgression: *Rom. vii. 12. The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

good. And the breaking over this so glorious a hedge, galls the penitent heart, the ingenuous spirit of an evangelical penitent.

[2.] As contrary to the holy nature of God : *Hab. i. 13.* *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* Sin is the worst of evils in itself, and in the eyes of the penitent. There is nothing so contrary to the chief good, and therefore it is the chief evil. Now, the true penitent loves God, his holy nature and perfections ; and therefore his sin is heavy to him, because by it he has walked contrary to him : *Lam. v. 16.* *Woe unto us that we have sinned.*

[3.] As the procuring cause of the sufferings of Christ : *Zech. xii. 10.* *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, &c.* Mount Calvary is the *Bochim* to the true penitent ; the sufferings of Christ are the commentaries on sin, which the true penitent reads ; the groans of a dying Saviour rent their hearts ; and by the wounds of a Redeemer they see the ill of sin.

This is the loathsomeness of sin, *Is. xxx. 22.* ; whereby it is not only hated for what attends it, but is abhorred for itself, as a thing which on no terms the soul could any longer digest.

2. For the qualities of it. It is,

1st, A particular and distinct sense of sin, not a general and confused one. No man that hears the gospel, having common understanding, but he confesses himself a sinner ; but many nevertheless are blind as to particulars. But this puts one in a capacity to lay his hands on his sores, saying, as *Psal. li. 4.* *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* It shews him his particular transgressions wherein he has exceeded, and the particular ills by which he has exceeded and offended in these. As the vermin appear crawling, when the stone is lifted up, which before lay hid ; so the ills of the heart and life appear to the penitent : *Rom. vii. 9.* *I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

2^{dly}, It is real, not imaginary. The Spirit of the Lord realizeth the evil of sin to the soul. And so it goes beyond a merely rational knowledge of sin, as far as the sense of the bitterness of gall got by tasting it, exceeds that got by the bare hearing of it : *Jer. ii. 19.* *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee : know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not*

in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. There is a spiritual sensation of spiritual things, arising from the new nature, as well as a natural feeling of what is grievous to us another way: *1 Cor. ii. 14. 15. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things.*

3dly, It is operative, not dead and idle. The eye of the penitent affects his heart; and the heart being touched, sets all the powers of the soul on work. It is the spiritual physick, that ceaseth not to work till the whole soul be purged; as in the case of *Peter's* hearers, *Acts ii. 37. who were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* There is a sense of sin which vents itself in nothing but in sighing and going backward, or in dry and fruitless complaints. It is like the disturbance which the sluggard meets with on his bed, which never thoroughly awakens him. But this sense of sin is thorough work.

Lastly, It is an abiding sense of sin, not a transient one in a fit, and so away: *Lam. iii. 49. 50. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission; till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven.* The humbled soul carries it about with him, as long as he carries the body of sin and death about with him, saying with the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* For it is not a slight touch, which goes as it comes, very easily. The removal of the stroke carries off *Pharaoh's* sense of sin; but here the wound is deeper, and so more abiding.

Use. 1. An unsensible sinner is an unhumiliated impenitent sinner; as was the case of the church of *Laodicea*, who said, *she was rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,* *Rev. iii. 17.* They that never digged deep, are not built on the rock. They that have never got a broad sight of themselves in the sinfulness of their hearts and lives, have never yet got a believing sight of Christ. Consider this, ye that have still lived at ease, strangers to any thorough exercise about your souls case; though the door is shut, the thief is in the house.

2. This shews how it comes that the pride of people's hearts still remains, though under crying guilt of sin. Though they know their sin, they have no due sense of it. If they had, it would

would be such a burden on their backs as would soon make them stoop, as *Peter's* hearers did, *Acts* ii. 37. Unsentible sinners may sit high in the seat of the scornful, while they see not what a God they have to do with: but when the Spirit of the Lord opens their eyes, and touches their hearts, to let them see and feel the evil of sin, they will lie low in the dust. They will, with the afflicted man, *put their mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope*, *Lam.* iii. 29.

3. See here a difference betwixt the saints humiliation, and that of the hypocrites. An *Ahab* may humble himself from a sense of the danger of sin; but a true penitent is humbled from a sense of the loathsomeness of sin, *1 Kings* xxi. 27. 29. *Job* xlii. 5. 6. A slave may bow himself for fear of the whip; but the disposition of a son is to be affected with the offence done to a kind father. Many will seem very low under the rod of God, and the apprehensions of his wrath, who are never touched with his love. They will be cast down under the sense of the evil their sin does to themselves, while the dishonour done to God by it lies far from their hearts.

4. *lastly*, Let me exhort you to get and entertain a deep sense of sin on your spirits. See your sins, and be duly affected with them, and be humbled for them. O how sad is it, that amongst our many thoughts, sin gets so few of them!

For motives to press this exhortation, consider,

1st, That the Lord is anew calling the land by his providence to be sensible of their sins, and to be humbled for them. The Lord took us not long ago as a brand out of the burning; but he is threatening to cast it into the fire again, by a foreign invasion *. For though we were delivered, yet the controversy remains still. We have not been thankful for our deliverance; Atheism, profanity, formality, contempt of the gospel, and a spirit of apostasy and declining from the Lord, and his work and way, wofully abound. How can we miss to fall at length!

2^{dly}, Consider the present dispensation of providence towards this congregation, threatening to leave our house desolate †. It fills the mouths of many with what is little worth;

* Meaning the *unnatural rebellion* that broke out in the year 1715; and an *invasion* from Sweden, in favour of a *Popish pretender* in 1717; in which last year these sermons were preached.

† This probably relates to a design of transporting Mr *Boston* to *Closetburn*, which however did not succeed.

would

would to God it might fill your hearts and mine with a serious inquiry into the causes of it before the Lord. It speaks aloud, O that we were taking up the language of the threatening rod. The melancholy state of this congregation, in the time of the last desolation, needs not be forgot. It would become us all very well on this occasion, to consider what a jealous God we have to do with, and what entertainment has been given to the preached gospel; to lay our hands every one on our own mouths, and consider well what we have contributed to the bringing of the matter to this pass. By taking with our sin, and humbling ourselves before the Lord, way might be made for the acceptance of prayer through Jesus Christ; and them that humble themselves, God will exalt.

3dly, Consider, that however light your sins may sit on your spirits, they are a burden to the holy Spirit of God: *Amos ii. 13. Behold, (says the Lord), I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.* And we may be sure the Lord will ease himself of that burden sooner or later. And if it be not by our repentance and humiliation, it will be by accomplishing his wrath on us: *Is. i. 24. Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.* Therefore consider your ways, in order to a returning to the Lord. The lighter that sin sits on us, it is the more grieving to the Spirit of the Lord.

Lastly, Consider, that without sense of sin there is no humiliation; that without humiliation there can be no repentance; and that without repentance there can be no escape from the wrath of God. *For except ye repent, ye shall perish.* Unsensibleness of sin, and the evil of it, locks up the heart in obduration and impenitency; and that will shut up the soul under wrath. But God loves the sensible humbled soul: *Jer. xxxi. 20. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.*

Secondly, In true humiliation there is a kindly sorrow for sin: *Zech. xii. 10. I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.* The soul is not only filled with remorse, but true grief, for offending a holy, gracious God. He grieved the Spirit in committing of sin, his spirit is grieved in

in repenting of it. The hard heart is broken, the adamant heart dissolved into tears of godly sorrow, the rock is struck by the rod of the gospel, and the waters gush out. The way to Zion lies through the valley of Baca: *Jer. l. 4. 5. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.* And it is the mourners for sin whom the Lord comforts with the consolations of his Spirit. This is that brokenness and contrition of heart, which God calls for, and takes so much pleasure in. This is the renting of the heart, which God requires, *Joel ii. 12. 13.* This is godly sorrow, which hath these properties.

1. It is a sorrow for sin as sin; not only for the guilt of it, but the loathsomeness of it; not only for the ill it does to ourselves, but the dishonour and wrong it does to a holy gracious God, *Psal. li. 4. Zech. xii. 10.* The penitent in his sorrow, goes farther than awakened reprobates, who seeing their souls ruined and dead, do put on their mournings. He grieves at the heart, because of the offence done to God, the defacing of his image, transgressing a holy and most just law, furnishing a spear and nails to pierce a Saviour.

2. It is an inward real sorrow. Not the hanging down of the head like a bulrush, *Jf. lviii. 5.* Not a made sorrow in a disfigured countenance, which lies all in outward appearance. But it is a sorrow soaking into the soul, and piercing the very heart, *Jf. lxi. 3.* And therefore it follows the man in secret, where no eye sees; making him mourn before the Lord, when the world knows nothing of it. For it ariseth from an inward principle.

3. It is a lively sorrow. The sorrow of the world worketh death. It stupifies a man, and takes heart and hand for duty from him. But the spiritual pangs of godly sorrow for sin quicken a man to his duty: *2 Cor. vii. 11.* For behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! It makes the man active in salvation-work. And the reason is, the one springs from slavish fear, which chills the soul, making it cold and stiff, and unfit for action; the other from love, which

warms the heart, and disposeth it for action : *Luke vii. 47. Her sins which are many, are forgiven ; for she loved much.*

4. It is an abiding sorrow. It is not a flash of an affection, which is deceitful, but a *spirit of heaviness*, *Is. lxi. 3.* The sorrows of many are like a summer-shower, that wets the surface of the ground, but is presently dried up, ere it do any good. But godly sorrow is like that, *Eccl. vii. 3. Sorrow is better than laughter : for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.* The soul, like *Mary*, mourns till it find the Lord, *Lam. iii. 49. 50.* forecited. It may indeed remit of its degrees ; but while sin abides, the spring of mourning abides too.

5. It is an universal sorrow. The true penitent heartily grieves for his own sin, *Psal. xxxviii. 18.* and for the sin of others, *Psal. cxix. 136.* It is like the letting out of waters : it may begin at one sin, but it does not stop there, but goes through all known sin, *Psal. i. 5.* and unknown too, *Psal. xix. 12. Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* They never truly mourn for one sin, that do not mourn for all : for that which moves sorrow in the repenting heart for one sin, is to be found in all sins, namely, its contrariety to the law and nature of God, the loathsomeness as well as danger of it. And hence, when once the flood-gate of godly sorrow is opened, it overflows all ; and the sweetest morsel becomes bitter.

6. It is deep sorrow. *Peter* repenting wept bitterly. He that would have a good crop, plows well ; and he that would build surely, goes deep with the foundation. It was the want of depth of earth that was the ruin of the stony-ground hearers, *Matth. xiii. 5.* And deep digging was the safety of the house founded on a rock, *Luke vi. 48.* This sorrow is a renting of the heart, *Joel ii. 13.* ; a renting of it as the plough rents the earth, *Jer. iv. 3.* ; a pricking and piercing of it as with daggers, swords, and spears, *Acts ii. 37.* compared with *John xix. 34.* ; a cutting it as with a knife, *Jer. iv. 4.*

It is a question, Whether penitential sorrow exceeds all other sorrows for the comforts of this life, or not ? If we measure by the moving of the heart and affections, it is evident, that at least always it doth not exceed other sorrows. But if we measure by the settled disposition of the heart, it is as evident that it does exceed them all. As the deeper waters ordinarily make least noise, so men will be more moved in a lesser joy and grief than in a greater ; for they are but the lightest joys that move laughter, and oft-times the greater

greatest sorrows are above tears. It settles more firmly, and continues more than any other sorrow whatsoever in the world.

7. *Lastly*, It is a heart-purifying sorrow. It works repentance or forsaking of sin: 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.* True mourning and turning are inseparable companions; though there is a mourning for sin, that is not deep enough to turn up the love of sin by the root. True sorrow in the heart is a spring, which as it runneth will work out sin, as to the love, habitual practice, and dominion of it, as a spring works out the mud thrown into it.

Use. 1. There is no repenting with a hale heart, and without repentance no salvation. People must either be broken for their sins in a way of mourning, or God will break them for them in a way of judgment. There are many stout hearts in our day, that will boldly outface challenges from the word and their own consciences, without either breaking or bowing. But let such remember, that there is a day coming when God will make the stoutest heart to tremble, and the heart of adamant to fly in a thousand pieces, *Psal. ii. 9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

2. How far must they be from humiliation, that sin deliberately, glory in their shame, and rejoice in ungodly courses and practices! I think providences and ordinances are hardening to many in our day; they are not bettered by them, and therefore they are hardened and made worse under them. Our penny-weddings and set drinkings, leaving such a stench behind them, and attended with before unheard of profanity, are speaking evidences of this. Are these Christian methods to help poor people? Will God accept the gift, where such a fat sacrifice is offered to the devil? Is that charity for which drinking must open mens hearts and hands to give? If some methods be not fallen on to prevent these things, they will bring wrath on the congregation *. I appeal to the consciences of all sober persons, if it looked not judgment-like, that in that very time when abroad a design was managing to lay the congregation desolate †, at home many

* Penny-weddings and drinking-bouts were not peculiar to the congregation of *Ettrick*: they prevailed as much elsewhere, and do so still, to the dishonour of God, and nourishment of profaneness.

† Meaning the design of transporting the author to *Glozeburn*.

were met for a set drinking carried on to a monstrous height of profanity, in the day and in the night. It becomes us all to mourn for this, lest we involve ourselves in the guilt. And particularly I warn all such as were any way partakers of that scandalous riot, to repent, lest wrath break out upon them. For it is a fearful thing to stand exposed to the lash of these threatenings, *Hab. ii. 15. Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink: that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayst look on their nakedness. Is. xxii. 12. 13. 14. And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.*

3. The sorrow of many for their sins, will tend to no good account before the Lord. Few have any remarkable sorrow for their sins at all; but amongst those whose hearts are really grieved and pained for their sin, how few are there that have any right sorrow? The danger of it, the disadvantage by it, the shame of it before the world, pains them a little; but the dishonour done to God by it touches them not effectually. And so their sorrow will be but the beginning of hell, not of repentance.

4. *Lastly*, Be exhorted to mourn for sin. Labour to get your hearts affected with this mournful object, and be not strangers to this exercise. The sins and threatened judgments of this day call for it; and it is the way to attain particular safety in common calamity: *Ezek. ix. 4. And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. If we were more in the duty of mourning, we would share more of the gospel-comforts, Matth. v. 4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.* And the more of the Spirit one has, the more will he be taken up that way.

Thirdly, In true humiliation there is a holy shame upon the account of sin before the Lord: *Rom. vi. 21. What fruit had ye in these things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.* The remembrance of sin fills the penitent with shame and blushing: hence says *Ezra,*

Ezra, chap. ix. 6. *O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.* Shame was never known in the world, till sin entered; yet sometimes sin comes to such a height with sinners, that it quite banishes shame: but the case of such is very desperate, *Jer.* iii. 3. *Thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.* Shame then is the remains of virtue in a sinner, to which whose are lost, are lost to all good, *Is.* iii. 9. *The shew of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.* Now, the grace of God awakens this shame, and sanctifies it in the penitent soul, so that he hangs down his head before the Lord, as ashamed of his way and heart.

There are four things occasion shame, and meet here.

1. Nakedness causeth shame. Hence said *Adam* to the Lord, *Gen.* iii. 10. *I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* Sin strips the sinners of their beautiful garments, takes away the glory of the rational creature, and leaves them without a covering before the eyes of a holy God. The penitent sees this, and is ashamed; and so, with the publican, cannot lift up his eyes to heaven, but smites on his breast, as if he would wound the breast that sin bred in, which has brought him to this shameful case.

2. Pollution and defilement, for that makes one loathsome to others, *Job* ix. 31. *Thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths shall abhor me.* Sin defiles the soul, takes away and mars all its beauty, and deforms it in the sight of God. And the penitent sees this, and is ashamed, *Is.* lxiv. 6. *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* Never was a man that had been plunged over head and ears in a mire, more ashamed to come before others in that case, than the penitent is ashamed to shew his face before God.

3. Disappointment of raised expectations, *Jer.* ii. 36. 37. The sinner in his impenitent state, looked for his happiness and satisfaction in sinful courses. But when his heart is touched, he is ashamed; for he finds, that instead of bread expected, he has got a stone; instead of fish, a serpent. He finds, that he has been courting his own death and ruin; and that from the wall he leaned on there has come forth a serpent and bit him. And hence is that reflection, *Rom.* vi.

21. *What fruit had ye in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

4. Discovering of one's reproach, *Jer. ii. 26. Sin is a reproach to any people.* In the impenitent state the soul's reproach is hid to it; but when grace touches the heart, and the Lord brings the sinner's ways to mind, lays his sins in broad-band before him, how can he miss to be ashamed? In a special manner, a conviction of base ingratitude fills one with shame, as to be convicted of designs against him who had saved our life. And thus the goodness of God duly considered, fills the penitent with shame and blushing, while he thinks what an ungrateful wretch he has been: *Jer. iii. 25. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.*

Use. 1. Shamefulness in sin is a badge of impenitency, and therefore a forerunner of destruction, *Jer. vi. 15. Phil. iii. 19. A forehead of brass is a sign the heart is of stone.* Impudence in sin argues a filthy heart, an obstinate disposition, and a seared conscience. And such are a stage beyond others from the kingdom of God. What hopes can they have of the glory of heaven, that glory in their shame?

2. We see then that sin will bring shame sooner or later, here or hereafter. As for them that live and die without repentance, their shame is sure, and they will be covered with it, before the great congregation of heaven and earth at the last day, and they shall never recover their countenance: *Dan. xii. 2. Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some—to shame and everlasting contempt.* And if people be recovered by repentance, they will be filled with shame before the Lord, even holy shame. But whatever shame men have, it is no holy shame that keeps them from glorifying God by taking shame to themselves when called thereto; for no grace of God keeps folk back from duty, *Josh. vii. 19.* Common discretion teaches us, that one ashamed of an injury done to the honour of another, cannot look him in the face but with shame, till he has done what he can to repair that honour.

3. *Lastly,* The penitent soul is an ingenuous soul, and heartily at odds with sin. For such an one will be ashamed before God, of what the world cannot tax him with. Many may be sorry for sin before God, because of the terrible consequences of it which they apprehend, who yet
are

are not ashamed before him, because they see not the evil that is in sin itself. But it argues a child-like disposition, to be heartily ashamed of secret sins before the Lord.

Fourthly, In true humiliation there is self-loathing and abhorrence: Ezek. xxxvi. 31. *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* The penitent not only loaths his sin, but himself for his sin. He cries out with Job, chap. xl. 4. *Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.* Repentance sets a man at variance with himself. He sees his ugly face in the glass of God's law, Christ's sufferings, and the Lord's goodness, and he loaths himself. This self-loathing manifests itself,

1. In the low and mean thoughts the penitent justly entertains of himself. True penitents see such vileness in themselves, as makes them give a very mean account of themselves. Abraham owned himself to be but *dust and ashes*; Jacob, *less than all the mercies of God*; David, *a worm, and not a man*; Asaph, *as a beast before the Lord*; Agur, *more brutish than any*; the centurion, *unworthy that Christ should come under his roof*; Paul, *one born out of due time, the least of the apostles, nay, less than the least of all saints, nay, the chief of sinners*; and the prodigal son, Luke xv. 19. *reckoned himself no more worthy to be called a son, but to be made a hired servant.*

2. In the penitent's being heartily out with himself upon the account of his sin: Job xlii. 6. *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* As one cannot with any pleasure touch himself, that has filth thrown on him, but his very heart stands at himself; so it is in spiritual self-loathing. He looks on himself as an ugly spectacle. He not only has nothing to say in defence of himself, but with indignation he rejects all the shifts and excuses for it, which he was satisfied with before: Luke xviii. 13. *The publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

3. In holy revenge, 2 Cor. vii. 11. He that was going on in sin before, is now divided against himself; so that the devil's kingdom of sin in him must needs go to ruin. He acts the part of an accuser, advocate, and judge, against himself; yea in some sort lashes himself for his sinful heart and life. Hence we find the humbled sinner,

1st, Smiting

1st, Smiting on his breast, *Luke xviii. 13.* as it were thereby declaring, that he deserves to be struck at the heart, and die for his transgression; that within him is the cause of all his sin and sorrows, he may thank himself for all; the source and spring of all is the corrupt heart.

2^{dly}, Smiting on his thigh, *Jer. xxxi. 19.* as if he would thereby declare, that he would be willing to take vengeance on the feet that carried him out of the way of God; that he is filled with indignation against himself, for his unaccountable practices, saying, *What have I done? what a wretched sinner have I been?*

There are these five things that stir up this self-loathing especially, in the penitent soul.

(1.) The remarkable blots, and signal miscarriages in his way, that deeply wound and defile the conscience; like *Peter's* denying of his Master, which made him weep bitterly, when he came to himself. These in a peculiar manner cover the soul with confusion, and fill it with self-abhorrence. And hence sometimes repentance begins at some such thing, from whence it spreads to the whole body of sin: *Acts ii. 36. 37. Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said,—Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

(2.) The fulness of sin seen in the soul: *If. lxiv. 6. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* The penitent being made sensible of his soul's case, sees the leprosy spread over the whole man, his mind under much darkness, his will rebellious against the will of God, his affections disordered, his whole nature corrupted, the seed of every sin in it; so that he concludes, that his heart is full of iniquity, and that the lusts that are hatched there, their name may be *Legion*. His life is a loathsome spectacle of the outbreaks and workings of that corruption. So that he sees that *from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness*; and therefore he loaths himself.

(3.) The pollution cleaving to his duties: *If. lxiv. 6.* forecited. While he sees how the running sore of his natural corruption drops on all his holy things, and defiles them, how can he chuse but loath himself? He sees his best works are like a moth-eaten garment, full of holes; never a prayer, nor confession made, but there are provocations against

gainst the Lord in them. His mournings for sin must be mourned over, because of the woful defects thereof; while he goes to mend one hole, still he is sure to strike out another. Thus the penitent is in his own eyes like *Job*, who had not whole fingers to dress his sores with; so he abhors himself.

(4.) The aggravations of sin, *Luke xv. 18*. A sight of these makes sin look like an opened stinking sore, wherein each of them contributes to make it more and more loathsome. When the penitent considers with what bent of affection he has sinned, the light, the many mercies, vows, and resolutions, &c. he has sinned against, he cannot but loath himself as a wretched self-destroyer, as an ungrateful miscreant, and as a beast before the Lord.

(5.) Instability in any thing that is good: *Hos. vi. 4*. — *Your goodness is as a morning-cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.* Wavering hearts, and wavering hands, are very humbling to a soul truly touched. A good frame is a rare hour, and stays but a short while. How often are resolutions fairly taken up, and begin to bud in endeavours for practice, that yet are quickly let fall again? How often do men relapse into the same sins, they have sometimes had made very bitter to them? There is nothing more apt than this to stir up self-abhorrence.

Use. 1. Self-conceit is a need-nail to a state of impenitency: *Rev. iii. 17*. *Thou [the church of Laodicea] sayst, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* No repentance can be where there is no humiliation, and there can be no humiliation while people are puffed up with a conceit of themselves. Publicans and harlots will enter into the kingdom of heaven, before such self-conceited professors. Whenever the Spirit of the Lord takes a dealing with such persons, and discovers to them the signal miscarriages in their life, the fulness of sin, &c. that swelling conceit of sweet self will fall away, as ever the snow melts in a sunshine day. They that look on themselves as among the chief of saints, will see themselves the chief of sinners.

2. Look into yourselves, if ye would loath yourselves and repent. Hence said *Isaiah*, chap. vi. 5. *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.* Things may be going all wrong in the house, and the master not know it, while he is a stranger at home. Many a poor soul is pining away in its iniquity, and running with loathsome

spiritual sores, threatening its ruin, while in the mean time they are mightily in love with themselves, and fond of their own condition, like a miserable man that is happy in a dream. But heavy will the awakening of such be.

3. *lastly*, Sin must needs be a very loathsome thing in the eyes of a penitent, since it makes him loath himself. Alas ! many times we love that in ourselves, which we loath in others. But when one loaths himself for his sin against a holy, gracious God, it is an argument that that soul is heartily out with sin.

Fifthly, and lastly, In true humiliation there is a penitent confession of sin. Hence is that exhortation, *Jer. iii. 13. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, &c.* This is the way that penitent sinners have always sought pardon and ease to their consciences in : *Psal. xxxii. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid : I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Confession of sin is the vomit of sin, whereby the sweet morsel is cast up again ; and it is the vent of real sorrow, shame, and self-abhorrence. And when the heart is loosed to it, the man becomes like the fish that is boiled in the water which it swimm'd in.

This confession is to be according to the nature of the offence. If the sin be a secret one, a confession to God in secret is sufficient. If it be a private offence, the confession is to be so too : *Jam. v. 16. Confess your faults one to another.* If it be a public offence, giving public scandal, the confession is to be public also : *1 Tim. v. 20. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.* So penitent David left his confession in record, for the church's edification. And so did the Apostle Paul, *1 Tim. i. 13.* And the reason is evident, since by sin God's honour is impaired, and we can repair it no other way, but by confessing it with sorrow, shame, &c. the confession must be according to the nature of the offence, else the wrong done to the honour of God is not repaired by it. And in the private and public confession God is our party, and not men only, as well as in the secret one.

Now, confession is a necessary part of humiliation. If the hard heart be loosed to be truly humbled for sin, it follows of course, that the tongue will be loosed to confess it. Hence confession is put for the whole of humiliation, yea of repentance, *Hos. v. 15. I will go and return to my place,*
till

till they acknowledge their offence. 1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Confession of sin hath two parts.

1. Self-accusing. God has given a law, the sinner has broke it; the penitent confesseth his transgression with shame and sorrow, to the honour of the Lawgiver. He cannot hide it, he dares not deny it; his soul is humbled, and therefore he confesseth it: *Psal. li. 3. I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.* He approves of the law as holy, just, and good, and disapproves of the transgression. Thus the morsel that was sweet in the mouth, turning bitter in the belly, is vomited up.

2. Self-condemning. Hence said the returning prodigal, *Luke xv. 18. 19. Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* The penitent looks to the law, and the demerit of his sin, reads his own doom, and passeth sentence on himself. He owns that all the evil he smarts under for the present, is just and righteous with God: *Dan. ix. 14. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doth: for we obeyed not his voice.* If his broken bones pain him, he will own that it is just. If his sin find him out, so that he read it in his punishment; he will acknowledge that it is a just contrivance; and that he deserves to sink under eternal wrath for it, saying with the afflicted church, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, Lam. iii. 22.* He will say, that God may justly take the filthy garments of his sin, cover them with brimstone, wrap him up in them, and cast him into the pit, *Psal. li. 4.*

Now, this confession should be sincere, full, very particular, free, and accompanied with forsaking *.

Use. 1. Hiding and covering of sin, and refusing to confess it in the way that God calls for a confession, is a sign of an heart not humbled for it: *Prov. xxviii. 13. He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* Many in our day falling into public scandals, by their works of darkness, put on a forehead of brass, and refuse to confess them for the glory of God, cheating themselves with that, that they will con-

* See Memorial concerning fasting.

fels their sins to God, but not to men. But little do they consider, that by that means they put a bar in their own way to pardon, while by resolute lying they cover one sin with another, and by refusing to honour God at his call. Nor do they consider the weight of that word standing in the way of their peace with God, while they refuse to remove the scandal, that so they may be reconciled to the church: *Matth. xviii. 17. 18. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* It is true, it is but a word; yea but it is God's word, that will be more terrible to an awakened conscience, than any punishment men can inflict.

2. They that shun to see their sins, that they may confess them, cannot repent of them: *Jer. ix. 6. 7. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit, through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?* It is true, there are sins which we cannot so see in ourselves as to confess them particularly; but in that case the soul does not refuse conviction, as *Psal. xix. 12, Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* But when one keeps the sweet morsel under his tongue, and has no will to see the evil of it, lest he should be obliged to confess it before the Lord, this is quite another case, and speaks a deceit of the heart, holding fast sin, and refusing to let it go.

3. *lastly*, Labour to be sincere, full, free, &c. in confessing of your sins. We are in debt to the justice of God, we cannot pay our debt; let us confess our debt, to prevent a pursuit, and that we may be capable to pray for forgiveness of it, which otherwise we cannot be. O, if we had a due sense and sorrow for our sins, this would, like an overflowing flood, bear down before them all those things which now hamper us in confessing our sins.

Thus far of humiliation, the first part of repentance. 2DLY, I come now to the second thing, *viz.* the returning of the soul unto God from sin. This is the completing of repentance. Whatever sense of sin, shame, sorrow, &c. for it one have, if it end not in returning to God, it is naught. It is under this notion that repentance is so often called

called for in the Old Testament, *Return, Turn ye*. And it may be well put for the whole of repentance: for,

First, The impenitent sinner is out of himself, out of his wits; but by repentance he returns and comes to himself. Hence we read, that the prodigal, *Luke xv. 17. came to himself*. There is never a soul that is brought to repentance, but there is as great a change upon him, as on a madman that is returned to his sound mind. He has quite other notions of things than he had before; he looks upon his sinful courses as the effects of spiritual frenzy. This is the first part of repentance, namely, humiliation,

Secondly, The impenitent sinner is out of his place, like a wandering bird: *Prov. xxvii. 8. As a bird that wandereth from her nest: so is a man that wandereth from his place*. And so the soul is out of its rest, and out of its duty. Adam shook himself and all his race out of their rest, and out of that they wander up and down in the devil's common. Repentance is the sinner's returning to his place again, to take up his place again in God's house among his servants. This is the second part of repentance. And whenever the soul comes to itself, it will come to God again. The grace of God finds the sinner, as the angel found *Hagar*, *Gen. xvi. 8. 9.*; and as *Paul* found *Onesimus*, *Phil. vers. 10. 11. 12*. Now, in this returning, according to the two terms,

1. There is a turning from sin: *Ezek. xiv. 6. Repent, and turn from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations*. 2 *Tim. ii. 19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity*. *Psal. xxxiv. 14. Depart from evil*. The sinner changes his course, and gives up with his former lusts. The impenitent sinner is a misled traveller, who finding himself wrong, will go no farther on, but leave the wrong way, and seek the right one. To repent of sin, and yet continue in the practice of it, is a contradiction. No; the true penitent ceases from sin, he gives over his work in the service of sin and lusts, *Jf. i. 16*. He forsakes his former ways, *chap. lv. 7*. And though sin remains in him, yet it reigns not as before. If the question be, How the penitent turns from sin; since he is daily offending, and sin abides in him, while he is here? I answer,

1. True penitents turn from it in their heart and affection. There is a bond in the impenitent state, whereby the sinner's heart is knit to his lusts, as ever the sucking child's heart is to the breast, which he can by no means want. Re-

pentance

repentance looseth that bond : *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* So though sin cleaves to the soul, yet the soul cleaves not to it as formerly. It hangs on him, it is true, but only as the chains on the captive, which are his burden ; as the grave-cloaths on *Lazarus* raised, which he is working to put off. Thus repentance makes a change of the heart. And,

1st, His esteem of sin is turned to despite. His judgment is set against it : *Is. ii. 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.* What he approved before, now he condemns ; for the scales are turned, and what was highest before is now lowest. Grace and holiness get the ascendant of sin and wickedness in his esteem. Those he counted most happy sometimes, because they took the greatest liberty in sinful courses, he now accounts most miserable, as slaves to sin, and in the road to destruction ; and therefore takes up *Joshua's* resolution, chap. xxiv. 15. *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

2^{dly}, His love of sin is turned to hatred of it : *Ezek. xiv. 6. forecited. Psal. cxix. 113. I hate vain thoughts. Vers. 104. I hate every false way.* It was good in his eyes before, better than the favour of God, and communion with him. He knew nothing good or desirable but the world and lusts, and what might satisfy the corrupt cravings of the soul. But repentance turns his soul against it, and he hates it as an evil thing, as the worst of evils, worse than suffering and afflictions. Were he left to his choice without fear of punishment, he would never chuse it ; for he hates it for itself, its contrariety to God's nature and will.

3^{dly}, His liking of sin is turned to loathing of it. Hence repentance is called *a casting away of sin*, *Ezek. xviii. 31.* as one would do some filthy thing that he cannot endure to have near him. For the penitent looks not only on sin as an ill thing, but as a loathsome thing which his heart stands at, *Is. xxx. 22.* And this is the ground of that self-loathing which the penitent is filled with.

Lastly, His cleaving to sin is turned into a longing to be rid of it, *Rom. vii. 24.* The man longs to be free of it, as ever the prisoner for the opening of his prison-doors, the captive for his being set at liberty, and the dropping off of his chains. It is a burden on his back, which he groans under ; a sickness to his soul, that he would fain have the cure

sure of. And therefore Christ with all his salvation is lovely in his eyes; his sanctifying Spirit, as well as his justifying blood.

2. They turn from it in their life and conversation. He that stood in the way of sinners before, now leaves it, when once the grace of God toucheth the heart, *Jf. lv. 7.* The penitent not only has a pure heart, but clean hands. Repentance will make a visible change on one's life: for it sets men to mortify the members of the body of death, *Rom. viii. 13.*; to refuse compliance with lusts and temptations, *Tit. ii. 12.*; to starve the lusts of the flesh, *Rom. xiii. 14.*; and to nail the body of sin with all its members to the cross of Christ, *Gal. v. 24.* And,

1st, They turn from the gross pollutions of the outward man, *Psal. xxiv. 3. 4.* An elect soul before conversion may be a habitual profane person, as well as others; but if he may be so after conversion, where is the difference betwixt Christ's sheep and the devil's goats? It is true, they may make gross slips, as *David* and *Peter* did; but they do not lie in them, they recover again by repentance. But a profane life is the mark of an impenitent state, *Gal. v. 21.* And it is a wonder how men can pretend to repentance, while they live in the habitual practice of drunkenness, swearing, sabbath-breaking, lying, dishonesty, and other gross pollutions of the outward man, where one would think the profane devil is not so much as gone out, far less cast out.

2^{dly}, They become tender with respect to the sins of common infirmity, labouring to make conscience of their words and actions, *Acts xxiv. 16.* What others account light of, they will stand at a distance from, as having felt the smart of sin; and that not only before the world, but even in secret, where no eye sees but God's. They will stand aloof from temptations, and even from the appearance of evil: and wherein they are overtaken through the frailty of the flesh, they will mourn for it before the Lord.

3. In respect both of heart and life. They turn against sin to oppose and resist it, in the inner and outward man, as taking now the contrary side to the devil, the world, and the flesh. The spiritual combat is begun in the true penitent, *Gal. v. 17.* The war with sin is proclaimed and begun, which never ends till death. They revolt from, cast off the yoke, and stand up against their old masters, *2 Tim. ii. 19.*

1st, They resist the motions of sin in their hearts, and endeavour

endeavour after heart-purity, as well as life-purity : *Psal. cxix. 113. I hate vain thoughts : but thy law do I love.* The Pharisaical professor may cleanse the outside of the platter, while he is little troubled about its being within full of ravening. But the hardest work a gracious soul has against sin, is with the heart, with what the world neither sees nor can see in him. And the guiding of the heart is the hardest piece of management in his religion.

2dly, They resist the outbreakings of sin in the life : *Psal. xviii. 23. I was also upright before him : and I kept myself from mine iniquity.* They see they are in a world where snares are thick laid ; they see their own weakness, and how ready they are to be intrapped, and therefore labour to be on their guard, lest they be carried away with the stream. Hence they are afraid of temptations, and therefore labour to shut their eyes from beholding vanity ; sometimes fearing to fall one day by the hand of temptation, and therefore longing to be beyond the reach of sin.

4. and lastly, Because their turning from sin is never perfect till death, therefore so long they are ay turning, and renewing their repentance, *John xiii. 10.* They are not true penitents who look on it as the work only of some days or weeks, at the soul's first conversion to God. A true penitent will ay be repenting, as long as he is sinning. He sees that he is often falling into the mire, and therefore must be often washing ; daily contracting new debt, therefore must be daily crying for forgiveness. And the more hainous his after miscarriages be, the longer he lies secure, his repentance will be the more bitter when he riseth up again.

Now, this turning from sin has these properties.

1. It is voluntary, as springing from an inward principle set up in the heart against sin : *Job xlii. 6. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* The penitent does not only cast away sin as a live-coal out of his bosom, that would burn him, but as some loathsome thing, that would defile him. Some turn from their sins against their will ; they part with their sin as *Phaltiel* did with his unlawful wife *Michal*, *2 Sam. iii. 15.* They dwell in the tents of sin, till the rigging-tree break, and there is no abiding longer there for them ; they part with their sins, as the covetous man with his riches at death, when, nill he will he, he must let it go. But true repentance is a turning from sin out of choice : and a forced reformation neither is sincere nor will last, *Psal. lxxviii. 34.*

2. It is sincere, as being a turning from sin as sin, a turning from it because it is a turning away from God, a turning from it for its contrariety to God's holy nature and law; *Luke xv. 18.* The man leaves his sin, not from the inferior motives only of danger to himself by it, but from the higher motives, namely, because it is offensive to God, dishonours his Son, grieves his Spirit, transgresses his law, and defaces his image. If your turning from sin proceed not from these motives, God will never regard it, as acceptable in his sight. It is done for self, not for God; and God will never be the reward of that work whereof he is not the end.

Quest. What should one do with respect to those sins he has turned from, from these lower motives of self, or those sins that have left him, before he left them? *Ans.* Do not turn back to them; but do with them as they use to do with those that die by their own hands, bury them disgracefully, and throw stones on their grave. Look on them and loath them, rise higher in your motives to forsake them than before. Ye left them for your own sake; put them further away for the sake of God's honour. Set them before your eyes again, and see how provoking they have been to a holy God, how dishonouring to his Son, &c.; repent and mourn over them on these accounts. And then your turning from them will be sincere.

3. This turning from sin is universal: *Psal. cxix. 104.* *I hate every false way.* *Ezek. xviii. 31.* *Cast away from you all your transgressions.* Whoever turns sincerely from one sin, turns from all known sin whatsoever; because the reason that moves the true penitent, is to be found in all as well as any one. Partial reformation is not sincere; for God requires the whole heart, and will not be served by halves. Every sin is a deadly wound to the soul; and therefore though many be cured, if but one remain uncured, the man is a dead man by that one: *Matth. v. 29.* *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* A drop of poison will make a whole cup of good wine deadly, and one sin retained, will render all our other reformation naught; as *Abimelech* the son of *Jerubbaal's* concubine was the death of all his seventy sons by his wives except one.

4. It is speedy, without delays: *Psal. cxix. 60.* *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* As long

as a man is undetermined to turn from his sin, or delays to do it, his repentance is not sincere. It is an evidence that the lance of humiliation has not gone deep enough, when the filthy matter does not presently spring forth. A man whose heart is truly touched with a penitent sense of sin, will delay as long the flinging a burning coal out of his bosom, as the casting away of his sin. No; when it goes to the quick, it must off presently; though it were an offending right hand, it must be cut off presently; though it were an offending right eye, it must be presently plucked out.

5. *Lastly*, This turning from sin is thorough; it makes complete work evangelically, though not legally. It was a flaw in *Judah's* repentance, that she *turned not unto the Lord with her whole heart, but feignedly*, Jer. iii. 10.; and in *Ephraim's* that he *mixed himself among the people*, and was *a cake not turned*, Hos. vii. 8. Men turn thoroughly from sin in these four respects.

1st, The true penitent sticks at no known sin, but turns from all without exception, even those sins that are dearest and nearest to them, and which they have been *most easily beset with*, Heb. xii. 1. *I kept myself from mine iniquity*, Psal. xviii. 23. This turning from sin is never thorough, till it reach the sin that is the sin of one's constitution, the sin that is the sin which most attends his calling, stations, and relations wherein he stands; the sin that he has most frequent and strongest temptations unto. That is the predominant evil which the heart must be loosed from, the right hand and right eye sin, the one thing lacking, which mars all other things, *Mark vii. 21*. Unless there be a turning from, a warring with this, it is all wrong; though indeed they may sometimes lose as well as win in the battle.

2^{dly}, He turns from that which is the insnaring hook in any of his sins, the handle whereby it caught hold of him, *Psal. cxxxi. 2*. *Pharaoh* would have been content to let *Israel* go, so be they would have left their little ones, which he was sure would have brought them back again. And Satan will let people turn from sin for a time, while they retain a reigning love to the bewitching thing that is in a sinful course. For while it is so, the tree is indeed cut, but the root is left in the ground, and will grow again.

3^{dly}, He turns from the occasions of sin, *Ezek. xiv. 6*. Wherefore *David* prays, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*; and *Solomon* gives advice in the case of drunkenness, *Prov. xxiii. 31*. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,*
when

when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself a-right. It is vain to pretend to repent and turn from sin, while men do not watch against the occasions of it, and wrestle against them, as against the sin itself. They that in a siege mind really to defend the town, they will defend the out-works as long as they can; wilfully to let the enemy in there, speaks treachery. Much lies in this point for reformation: *Prov. iv. 14. 15. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*

Lastly, He turns from the enjoyment of the fruits of his sin. To pretend to turn from sin, and yet to feed sweetly on the fruits of it, is an absolutely vain pretence. When sin itself is truly quit, the profit of it is given up with. This the prophet teacheth, *Is. xxxiii. 15. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, &c.* This is so evident, that even Judas in his repentance, such as it was, could no longer brook the reward of his iniquity, *Matth. xxvii. 3.* A philosopher had bought a pair of shoes, but had not paid the price of them; the tradesman died; the philosopher thought the money was gained; but his conscience caused him bring back the money, and throw it into the shop. "Take it," says he, "thou art alive to me, while dead to all the world besides." Hence two things belong to this part of repentance.

(1.) Restitution, or restoring the thing again, which has been sinfully and wrongously taken away from others. He that can do it, and will not, cannot repent of that sin; for he wilfully feeds on the fruit of his sin; and that is a continuing in it inconsistent with turning from it. And since there is no pardon of that sin which a man does not repent of, it is a maxim in divinity, *Non remittitur nisi restituitur*, namely, to a person that is able, but unwilling to do it. Hence *Zaccheus* proves himself a true penitent by restitution, *Luke xix. 8.* And one may as well think a thief may repent in the time he is feeding on what he has stolen from his neighbour, as that one may repent of what in other cases he has unjustly taken from his neighbour, and can, but will not restore. When lovers part, they give back their tokens; and so when a sinner parts with his sin, he restores all that he had unjustly taken from others.

(2.) Reparation as far as may be, in those cases wherein proper restitution cannot be made : as in the case of unjust wounding our neighbour's honour, reputation, peace, quiet, and contentment, &c. Hence is that exhortation, *Jam. v. 16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* One may as well pretend to repent and go on in sin, as wilfully to refuse this and repent of the sin. The like reparation is necessary in those scandalous sins, whereby the honour of God is impaired before the world, religion wounded, and exposed to the contempt and scorn of profane men, and the hearts of the godly saddened. To repent of such sins, and yet wilfully to refuse the way whereby the honour of God, and the credit of religion, might in some measure be repaired, is impossible. One may as well pretend to repent of his wounding a man, while he stands looking on him bleeding to death, and will not, though it is in his power, bind up his wounds.

Use. 1. Hence we may see what is the proper way to follow out the design of our congregational fast ; namely, to turn from our sins which have provoked the Lord to wrath against us. For humiliation without reformation can do little service. Let each of us lay our hands to our heart, and consider what has been the coal that we have cast in to raise this flame, and heartily turn from these things. If so, we would readily wear with thankfulness the blessings obtained by prayers.

2. All the trouble, grief, and sorrow that men have for their sin is little worth, if it issue not in turning from sin. For men to be sighing, but still going backward, is not repentance, but of that sort which may be carried on in hell, through eternity. If turning be not joined to mourning for sin, it is unsanctified sorrow, that will neither be acceptable to God, nor profitable to our souls.

3. Turning from sin outwardly, while the heart remains glewed to it, is not repentance either. It is an easy thing to reform outwardly ; but the great business lies in getting the heart weaned from the world and lusts. If we would be satisfied as to the truth of our repentance, we must likewise examine the motives prevailing with us to turn from sin ; for the mean and low motives that rise no higher than ourselves, our own advantage, ease, safety, &c. will never denominate us true penitents.

4. Repentance is not the work of a day or a year, but the work of our whole lives. For so turning from sin is,

Sin

Sin follows us, while we flee from it; often does it overtake us, and so we must renew our flight. The whole life of a Christian is a war; in that war are many battles, sometimes the Christian gains the day, and sometimes he loses. If he lose, he must renew the battle; if he win, he must pursue the victory, and lay his account with a new engagement. The great comfort is, that though he may lose a battle, yet he shall be victorious in the war: *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under his feet shortly*, Rom. xvi. 20.

5. *Lastly*, See here the necessity of turning from sin. *Except ye repent*, says the text, *ye shall all likewise perish*. Now, if ye do not turn from sin, ye do not repent; therefore if ye turn not from it by repentance, ye shall perish. Our sins or our souls must go. Turn, or burn in the fire of God's wrath, is the choice. Let us then return speedily and thoroughly from all our iniquities, so *shall they not be our ruin*.

II. In repentance there is a *returning unto God*: Hos. vi. 1. *Come, and let us return unto the Lord*. This is the term to which the sinner comes back. Sin is a *departing from God*, repentance is a *coming back* to him again. It is a *coming back*, like that of a runaway servant to his master, returning to his place and duty in the family. Sin carried away mankind from God two ways.

1. Sin carried men away from God as a portion wherein to rest. He is all-sufficient to himself and to his creatures, and none but he is so. Sin carried man away from God to the creatures for happiness and satisfaction: hence says Jeremiah, Jer. ii. 13. *My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water* *. There he seeks a rest to his heart. By faith man returns to God as a portion, unites with him again through Christ, and takes up his everlasting rest in him. Thus he returns as the dove to the ark, Is. lx. 8. *Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?*

2. Sin carried man away from God as a Lord and Master, to whom he owes obedience. In this respect man returns to God by repentance, returning to his duty, Psal. cxix. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies*; as Hagar was by the angel sent back to Sarah,

* See the author's sermons on this text, vol. 2.

Gen. xvi. 9. Men turning from God, turn their backs on his laws, and make their own lusts their laws; but the repenting sinner turns back to the laws of God, *Psal. cxix. 59.* forecited. He has slipt his neck out of the yoke of the commands of Christ, but he comes and takes it on again, never to throw it off more, *Matth. xi. 29.* He has gone off the road, the strait way; but he comes back, and bids an eternal farewell to the broad way. And there is here,

1st, A return of the soul to God himself, *1 Kings xviii. 37.* consisting in the heart's turning to the loving and liking of the Lord as a Lord and Master. Sinners departing from God, not only dislike their service, but the Master and his house: *Luke xix. 14.* *His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.* They are filled with prejudices against him, there is a natural aversion in the heart to him, they cannot away with subjection to him. Hence they say unto God, *Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways,* *Job xxi. 14.* But in repentance that aversion is cured, and the soul inclines and moves towards him in heart and affections. This consists in three things.

(1.) The soul is brought to esteem the Lord worthy to be served and pleased in all things. The name of God is to the penitent a *worthy name*, *Jam. ii. 7.* The soul sees the transcendent glory and excellency of God, worthy of all adoration and obedience; and so slights and disdains all other masters, as unworthy of the service of an immortal soul.

(2.) The soul chuseth him as its only Lord and Master, saying, as in *Isa. xxvi. 13.* *O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.* This was *Joshua's* choice, *chap. xxiv. 15.* *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* The enlightened mind beholds his glory, the glory and excellency of himself, his image, laws, ordinances, and service; and the renewed will consents and cleaves to him. It has tried many masters, *serving diverse lusts*, *Tit. iii. 3.*; but could never have satisfaction in the service of any of them, and therefore says, as *Hes. ii. 7.* *I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.*

(3.) The soul looks upon the service of God as its great happiness. Hence said the prodigal, *when he came to himself, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* *Luke xv. 17.*

And

And therefore the saints are found declaring them happy who are most employed in his service, as the queen of *Sheba* said of Solomon's servants: *Psal. lxxv. 4. Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts.* And *lxxxiv. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee.* And till the soul come to this, to account the Lord's service the only true freedom and happiness, though they may take up his service, they will not abide with it, because they do not like their Master.

2dly, There is in this returning a return of the soul to its duty to God. Hence said *Saul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* *Acts ix. 6.* Whoever returns to God, comes home as a servant to enter to work: for idlers about God's house may be nominal servants, but real ones they cannot be. God's servants have higher relations which they stand in unto him; but all of them have duty annexed to them. Are they married to Christ? they must bring forth fruit, *Rom. vii. 4.* Are they friends? they must do whatsoever he commands them, *John xv. 14.* See *Mal. i. 6.* Now, the penitent returns to his duty in these two respects.

(1.) The penitent returns to his duty in his heart. He is (1.) reconciled to the whole law of God, and the whole yoke of Christ, so far as it is known to him to be his law and yoke, *Psal. cxix. 6. I have respect unto all thy commandments.* He has a love and liking of the duties of piety towards God, and righteousness towards men. Though there remain in him a contradicting principle, yet he can say, as *Rom. vii. 22. I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.* The heart-enmity against the law and the power of godliness is removed, and nothing is so desirable to him as to be holy as God is holy. (2.) He has a full and fixed purpose of new obedience: *Psal. cxix. 57. O Lord, I have said, that I would keep thy words.* *vers. 112. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.* He returns with a purpose never to be what he has been; to pursue holiness, to enter upon and keep the way of duty, whatever be the hardships and difficulties he may meet with in it. And this purpose is for to-day, not for to-morrow only; not to delay a minute, but presently to fall in with every known duty, as knowing there is no time for delaying.

(2.) The penitent returns to his duty in both heart and life. He is brought to sincere endeavours after new obedi-

ence:

ence : 2 Cor. vii. 11. *Behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge ! in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.* Purposes without endeavours are but fair blossoms without fruit, which will never prove a penitent. If the lame man be cured, though not perfectly cured, he will rise and walk as he can. It is true, while here we can do nothing perfectly well ; but the true penitent will endeavour to do all, and aim at no less than perfection. Hence said *Paul, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 14. So the penitent returning to his duty,

[1.] Returns to the practice of every known duty. Hence said *David, I have respect unto all thy commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6. He labours to know what is duty, and is willing to know it ; and when known, endeavours to perform it. He puts hand to external and internal obedience ; to serve God in heart and life too ; to perform his duty to God and to his neighbour ; personal and relative, secret, private, and public.

[2.] Returns to spirituality in every duty : *Phil. iii. 3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh* *. The true penitent will not silt in the carcase of duties, but will endeavour to get in to those unseen things where lies the life and soul of duties ; namely, to have his heart oiled with love to God as the principle of his obedience, touched with regard to the honour of God as his end, raised above selfish ends and designs, and performing all in faith, leaning on the Lord for strength.

Now, this returning to the Lord is,

1. A sincere returning, not feigned and hypocritical, with the whole heart, *Jer. iii. 10.* Hypocrites are said to have a heart and a heart, a divided heart, one for God, and another for their lusts. But the Lord says in this case, *If ye take me, let these go away. For no man can serve two masters.* It is a returning to him to abide with him for ever, as *Onesimus to Philemon*, vers. 15. The penitent, like the servant under the law, his ear is nailed to God's door-

* See the author's sermons on this text, in this volume.

posts, to serve him for ever. To return for a time is naught.

2. A voluntary return. The penitent comes back with heart and good-will, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*; as one that is going back to a good and honourable master, and will serve him with gladness: *Psal. c. 2. Serve the Lord with gladness*. They that are only driven back to God, by heavy rods or sharp convictions, will come away again; yet people may be driven at first to God, who seeing his glory and excellency, and the desirableness of his service afterwards, do voluntarily and heartily yield themselves to him.

3. A speedy return: *Psal. cxix. 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments*. They that are sincere will not delay for a moment; they will make no truce with sin. The moment wherein true repentance touches the heart, is the precise term of going home to God; for they know that if they delay a moment longer, that moment may be the fatal moment to them.

4. A thorough return. The soul sticks at no known duty, but embraces all, be it never so hard, and unpleasant to flesh and blood. Hence said the Lord of David, *Acts xiii. 22. I have found David the son of Jesse; a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will*. The penitent puts a blank in God's hand, saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Speak, Lord, says he, thy servant heareth*. He is for the will of God, without disputing. For God is an absolute master, and is therefore to be obeyed without reserve.

Use of this point. It lets us see, that negative reformation is not sufficient for repentance. One must not only turn from sin, but turn unto God. We must not only put away evil, but take in to us the contrary good: *Jf. i. 16. 17. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c.* We must not only give up with such and such lusts, but be endued with the contrary graces. Some people reform from the evils of their life, but they do not go forward to the positive ways of holiness. They satisfy themselves, with the proud Pharisee, that they are not unjust, no extortioners, &c.; but, alas! they do not consider, that when the house which the devil goes out of is empty, he returns with seven spirits more wicked than himself, and so

the last state of such a person is worse than the first, *Matth.* xii. 44. 45.

The APPLICATION.

I come now to the APPLICATION of the whole. And here I would sound the alarm in the ears of impenitent sinners, to repent, and turn from their sins unto God. O sinners, repent, repent; ye are gone away to your lusts and idols, turn from them; ye have turned your back on God, turn to him again. In prosecuting this call to repentance, I shall,

1. Endeavour to convince you of the need you have to repent.
2. Lay before you a train of motives to repentance.
3. Shew you the great hindrances of repentance. And,
4. Give directions in order to your obtaining repentance.

I. I shall endeavour to convince you of the need you have to repent, to make way for the motives to it their taking with you. There are three sorts of persons that will readily stave off all our calls to repentance.

1. One says, I repent of my sins daily. Well were it with thee, if it were so. Sure, there is need for it. But none are so ready to pretend to this, as those that never yet knew what it is to repent. If ruing the ill thou hast done, a sigh for it, and a short-winded wish for mercy, be repentance, it is easy work. But it is not so. Thou canst not repent with a hale heart: that heart of thine must be rent for sin, and rent from it; thou must turn from sin unto God in all known duties of obedience. If ye pretend then to repentance, bring forth fruits meet for it. But to such pretended penitents we may say, as *Samuel* to *Saul*, *1 Sam. xv. 14. What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen?*

2. Another says, I have repented already. But O consider, repentance is not the work of a day, but of thy whole lifetime, since thou art never free of sin, *Jer. viii. 6. New provocations require new repentance; nay old sins are not to be forgotten. Hence said Moses, Deut. ix. 7. Remember, and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness. And hence prays the Psalmist, Psal. xxv. 7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions. And if thou repent of them thoroughly, thou wilt be ashamed, and the wound will bleed afresh at the remembrance of them.*

them. Hence said the Apostle, *Rom. vi. 21. What fruit had ye in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?*

3. Another sees no need of repentance for him; for such persons are of that blinded generation *that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness*, *Prov. xxx. 12.* They deny their sin instead of mourning over and confessing it, saying as *vers. 20. I have done no wickedness.* They possibly keep free from the gross pollutions of the outward man; and for the positive duties of religion, they either see no need of them, or if they do perform them too, they are blind to the corruption of their nature, and to heart-sins, and the spirituality of the law of God. But ye need repentance as much as the proud Pharisee, *Luke xviii.* and as the Apostle *Paul, Rom. vii. 9.* compared with *Tit. iii. 3.* But O consider,

1st, Are there not many of us that never got a sound awakening all their days? They have lived under the sound of the gospel, but it never broke their rest effectually in a sinful course. I will read the mystery of your case, *Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.* Repent then, or ye are undone.

2^{dly}, Are there not many whose awakening has produced a partial change on them, but it has ended in a fearful apostasy from the way of God? *2 Pet. ii. 22. It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Their fair blossom they once had, has gone up as dust. Repent, or your backsliding will be your ruin.

3^{dly}, Are there not many sleeping virgins at this day, who are in a course of departing from God? The life, vigour, and tenderness they sometimes had, is gone; and death has settled down on their eye-lids, and they are turned to be of the colour of the earth. To these we must say, as *Rev. ii. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.*

4^{thly}, Are there not many living in known sin? They know the particulars wherein they are wrong, and yet on they go, as an ox to the slaughter. Their corruptions are too strong for conscience. Ye must repent, or ye will perish. Profane courses will make a miserable end, and one sin retained will ruin the soul.

5^{thly}, Look and see whether thou canst perceive the footsteps of Christ's flock, or of the devil's drove, on the way

which thou art going, *Cant. i. 8.* Is your case the case wherein the fair company walked with displayed banners to *Canaan*, or that wherein many have slept and slipt away to the pit?

6thly, Canst thou deny but that there are many foul steps thou hast made and art making? O then repent. Go no farther on; one step more may put you beyond returning, *Luke xiv. 24.* Little knows the sinner, how soon God may take the foot from him, either by clapping a withering curse on him, as on the fig-tree, *Hos. iv. 17.* or by taking him red-hand in his sin, and sending him to the pit, *Prov. xxix. 1.* *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*

II. I will lay before you a train of motives to repentance.

Mot. 1. Consider the obligations that lie on you to repent. Sit down and consider how manifold ties are on you to it.

1. The command of God obligeth you to it: *Acts xvii. 30.* *God commandeth all men every where to repent.* And will ye not have regard to the sovereign authority of him that made you? The command to repentance is one of the two great commands of the gospel, *Acts xx. 21.* *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is the command which the prophets of old did so often inculcate, *Ezek. xviii. 30.* *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.* This our Lord Jesus and the Baptist preached, and his disciples, saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This the Apostles preached, *Acts ii. 38.* *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* And this all along is the joint found of the preachers of the gospel. So it is an old and new command too. No command is more peremptorily laid on, as in the text. As ye regard then God's authority, repent.

2. Your baptism obligeth you: *Mark i. 4.* *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.* It is a solemn tie laid upon you to return to and serve God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to die unto sin, to live unto righteousness. Ye have then taken on the Lord's badge; how dreadful must it be to continue runaways from your great Master? Repent, then, and return, as ye would not be treated as runaways from your

your colours, as rebels that cast off your allegiance sworn to the King of heaven.

3. Your mercies oblige you in point of gratitude; *Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* your common mercies, and special ones, preventing, restraining, &c. Every mercy is forfeited by sin; yet ye are still in God's debt, and every day a new load of favours is laid on, and these are strong ties to repentance.

4. *Lastly*, Your profession obligeth you. Ye profess yourselves Christians. If ye will name the name of Christ, then depart from iniquity, *2 Tim. ii. 19.* Why do ye call God Father, if ye will needs do the works of the devil, (*John viii. 44.*) which Christ came to destroy? Do ye profess Christ your Redeemer, the Holy Ghost your Sanctifier? why then do ye continue in bondage to your sin, in unholy courses? Do ye believe every sin deserveth God's wrath? what madness is it then to be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? Quit your profession then, or quit your sinful courses.

Mot. 2. Seriously consider what sin is, that ye are so fond of, prefer to Christ, and for the enjoyment of it forfeit the favour of God. What do you see in it, that does so powerfully charm you? If you are taken with the profit of it, ye would consider that no advantage will quit the cost of the soul's ruin brought about by it: *Matth. xvi. 26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Job xxvii. 8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?* If you are taken with the pleasure of it; that is dear bought, being purchased at the rate of eternal flames, which sin will bring men to without repentance. The pleasures of sin are but momentary, *Heb. xi. 25.* And there is far more in God's service, even in this world: *Psal. iv. 6. 7. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* Consider, I pray you,

1. Has not every bait a hook with it? *Prov. xxiii. 31.*
 32. Is there not a trap, gin, and snare in them all for you? How often have ye seen there has been death in the pot, when ye have sit down to feed your corruptions? Ye have snatcht

snatcht at the bait, but have ye not in the mean time felt yourselves wounded with the hook? ye have smelled the rose, but have not the prickles mean while annoyed you? And how can it be otherwise? for *he that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it; and who so breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him, Eccl. x. 8.*

2. Is there any solid rest in a sinful course? No, surely: *Is. lvii. 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* Do not your consciences witness, that the sting of guilt in the conscience is like a dead fly in the ointment, causing all to be unfavoury? Is there not always a worm at the root of every sinful gourd you sit down under the shadow of? Do not the very may-be's of conscience suck the sap out of your lusts many times? Will any man say, that ever he found rest to his soul in a course of departing from God? No, no; ten thousand worlds will not satisfy an immortal soul.

3. Do not ye find sin to be an insatiable tyrant, like the grave and the barren womb, never saying, *It is enough?* *Is. lvii. 20. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.* O but they have a hard task, that have living raging lusts to feed! *James iv. 2. 3. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Psal. lxxviii. 18. 19. And they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God: they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* The more they are indulged, the more they grow rampant; the more their thirst is cared for, the greater thirst is created. Hence men in a sinful course go from evil to worse.

4. Is not a sinful course a most foolish course? No man is unfaithful to God, but he is unfaithful to himself, and his own interest and happiness. The Lord offers to reason the matter with you, and to make your consciences judge, *Is. i. 18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll.* It stands betwixt you, and temporal and eternal happiness. It is a poisonous cup, bringing death along with it. And how foolish is it for men to hug a serpent in their bosom, when called to throw it out; to drink a cup of poison, when called to throw it away; to take coals in their bosom, when
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it is told they will burn them ; to court their own death and ruin ?

5. Is not sin the separation-wall betwixt God and you ? *If. lix. 2. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.* Does it not mar your comfort from the word, your confidence in the Lord, and your access to God in duties ? does it not make as it were a gulf betwixt Heaven and you, that whatever communion others have with Heaven, your unrepented-of sins lets you have none ? Shall this be your choice ? Sure, then, ye need not wonder, if ye will not come back to God, he bid you at last depart from him, *into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

6. Lastly, Consider what will be the end thereof. Surely it will be bitterness in the end : *Jer. ii. 19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee : know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.* However pleasant the cup seem to be at the brim, the dregs of it will be bitter : *Prov. ix. 17. 18. Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there ; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.* However taking the entertainment be, the reckoning will be dreadful.

Mos. 3. Consider ye must die : *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die.* Death is certain, and therefore repentance is necessary. O if men would realize death to themselves, sinners would soon find it necessary to turn a new leaf. One hearing *Gen. v.* read in the church, was so impressed with the thoughts of death, that he presently betook himself to a new course of life, that he might die well. We must all meet with death, lie down in the grave ; let us view it aforehand, and see how it calls us to repent. Look to thy dying hour, and to thy grave, O impenitent sinner, and consider these few things.

1. Wouldst thou be content to die as thou livest ? Thou livest in thy sin, without God ; wouldst thou desire to die so ? Many indeed entertain *Balaam's* wish, for the death of the righteous, while they care not for their life, *Num. xxiii. 10. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* But remember he did not get it, *chap. xxxi. 8. — Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword.* And while death is so uncertain, it is the hanging of an eternal

ternal weight on a hair, to look to get matters mended then, that are not mended now.

2. Consider, what will a sinful life look like on a death-bed? How will ye be able to look your unrepented-of guilt, and a long eternity in the face together? *Ezek. xxii. 14. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.* Sin sits easy now on a sleepy conscience, while health and strength lasts, and death appears not. But when death stares thee in the face, and the awakened conscience flies upon thee, it will cut to the heart, that thou hast not repented before.

3. What will it be to die, and go to another world with a load of unrepented-of guilt on thy back? Look to your grave aforehand; think with yourselves, how will it be to lie down there with your bones full of your iniquity? Is it not best now, to shake off and cast away your transgressions, as knowing that however ye may live with them, ye cannot die with them well.

4. At a dying hour ye must part with the world, and the enjoyment of your lusts. The foul feast ye sit at now, death will overthrow the table, and the sad reckoning for it comes in then, and continues for ever. O rise up now, and leave it by repentance. Part with these things at God's call, which ye must part with ere long, whether ye will or not.

5. *Lastly*, There is no repentance in the grave, *Ecc. ix. 10.* Ye must repent, or ye perish: and it is now or never. Mar matters now by an impenitent life, and let death catch you there, ye shall never be able to mend them more. The working time, and time of trial is over then. If the brittle threed of life were broke, which may be snapt asunder in a moment, then ye are beyond the line of mercy. The candle burnt to snuff, shall be as soon brought to burn again, as time shall be recalled.

Mot. 4. Take a view of the tribunal of God, before which thou must appear: *2 Cor. v. 10. 11. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.* O sinner, knowest thou not that there is a judgment to come, and how this calls thee to repent? *Acts xvii. 30. 31. God commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in*
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the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Were men to lie for ever neglected, without a future reckoning, as the beasts that perish, they might live as they list, the hazard of condemnation for an eternity would not press them. But it is not so: *Heb. ix. 27. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* Consider,

1. While thou art going on in sin, thy debt to the divine justice is increasing, the accounts are swelling; and the reckoning for them before the tribunal will be terrible, however little ye think of them now, *Eccl. xi. 9.* They may fall out of thy memory, but they will not fall out of the book of God's remembrance, *Hos. xiii. 12.* But now is the time to get them laid over on the cautioner's score.

2. Though thou wilt not seek them out now to mourn over them, and turn from them, they will find thee out before the tribunal of God. Happy would the sinner be, if his sins would part with him at the grave; but they *shall lie down with him in the dust, Job xx. 11.*: or if they would lie down with him there, if they would lie still and never rise again; but *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. 14.* The Judge is omniscient, nothing can be hid from him, he is not capable to forget the least injury which the sinner has done to his glory; all must come into the account.

3. When thou seest Christ come again, and his throne set for judgment, when the trumpet shall blow, and the dead arise, and made to compare before that tribunal, when the heavens and earth shall pass away, what will be thy thoughts of staving off repentance?

4. *lastly,* Thy state for eternity will be determined there according to thy deeds done in the flesh. Impenitent sinners will get a long eternity to rue their obstinacy in, while those that repented in time shall be happy for ever.

Mot. 5. To move you to repentance, consider the sufferings of Christ. A Roman senator intending to provoke the people to revenge the death of *Cesar* killed by *Brutus*, brought forth his bloody robe, and cried, Here is the robe of your late emperor. And O will ye look to the bloody robe of Christ, hung up on the pole of the gospel, to move you to repentance? *Zech. xii. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, &c.* And learn here,

1. How dreadful must God's indignation against sin be, which is written with the blood of Christ, pierced with the sword of justice: Is it not a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? And shall we continue in sin, against which such indignation appeared?

2. Sin appeared terrible in *Sodom* when in flames, but yet more terrible in mount *Calvary*, where the justice of God pursued the Son of God with the sword of vengeance. A spectacle of amazement, The Son of God set up for a mark to the arrows of God! Do ye not ask into the cause of all this? It was sin. The children ate the sour grape, and the father's teeth were set on edge. They contract the debt, justice lays hold on him, and he restores what he took not away, *Psal. lxxix.* 4. The elect took on the debt jovially, but he is put to tears and strong cries in the paying of it. And will we not hate and loath sin?

3. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods from above nor from below drown it. Behold how he loved you.* He might have been happy in his Father's love, though mortals had never shared of it with him. But such was his love to sinners, as made him lay down his life for them, that so a way might be paved for the egress of his Father's love towards them. And will ye not hate and loath sin which was the cause of his death? *Is this your kindness to your friend?*

4. When Christ suffered, the earth quaked, rocks rent, the dead arose, the sun was struck blind with the sight, and hid his face for shame: and how can we stand unmoved, who were the first movers of the bloody tragedy, whose sins furnished a *Judas* to betray him, a *Pilate* to sentence him, &c.? Look here, and mourn for, and turn from sin.

5. *lastly*, Did he not suffer enough? must he suffer more still, even in his state of exaltation? will ye grieve his Spirit, trample on his laws, yea and his blood, continuing impenitent in your sins?

Mot. 6. Consider the wrong done to God by your sin, in which ye may see the ugly picture of it. This kept *Joseph* from yielding to a strong temptation, *Gen. xxxix.* 9.; and pierced *David's* heart with repentance for his sin, *Psal. li.* 4.; and lay heavy on the prodigal son, *Luke xv.* 18. Every sin reacheth the throne of God in heaven, and him that sits on it. It is true, the malice of sinners against God is impotent malice, and can do him no real prejudice, do their worst. They cannot make him less happy, they cannot disturb his peace,

peace, *Job xxxv. 6. 7. 8.* But the sinner is like the beggar full of sores lying on a dunghil, venting his spite against the prince on the throne. He wrongs the honour of God, his declarative glory, though he can do nothing against his essential glory. Sinner, thou wrongest God by thy sin,

1. By setting thyself in opposition to his nature and will. What is sin continued in without repentance? *A walking contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 21.*; an interpretative aim to throw him down from his sovereignty, *Psal. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* Thou mayst put what fair colours thou pleasest upon it; but it is a throwing out the flag of defiance against the God that made thee. For dost thou not thereby in effect, disregard his all-seeing eye, and presence every where, bid defiance to his justice, and call in question his truth, despise his goodness and mercy, and run counter to his holy nature and will, while thou runs still on that of which he has said, *Jer. xlv. 4. Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate?* And is this a course to be insisted in?

2. Thou wrongest God by trampling on his laws, *Is. xxxiii. 22.* He has given thee a law to be the rule of thy life, he has stamped it with his own sovereign authority, fenced it with punishments threatened, suitable to his infinite greatness: but thou makes no more of these than if they were cob-webs fit only to catch flies. Thou breakest through the fences, and in contempt of his authority, will be over into the forbidden ground. Thus thou affrontest the God that made thee: will he sit with it think ye? No; he can avenge the affront, *James iv. 12. There is one lawgiver, who is able to destroy;* and he will do it, *Luke xix. 27. Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

3. Thou wrongest God by despising his Son, *John v. 40.* Ye wrong God at the rate heathens cannot do, and therefore your condemnation will be greater than theirs, *John iii. 19.* God has sent his Son into the world, by his death to procure reconciliation betwixt God and sinners; he has exalted him to give repentance, *Acts v. 31.*: but by your continuing in sin, ye slight his death, and the purchase of his blood: you love your disease so, as you loath the Physician. What will be the end of these things? *Acts xiii. 41. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.*

4. Thou wrongest God by grieving his Spirit, *Eph. iv. 30.* Hear God's complaints of impenitent sinners, *Ezek. vi. 9.*

I am broken with their whorish heart which hath departed from me, and with their eyes which go a whoring after their idols. Amos ii. 13. Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves. How often has the Spirit of the Lord been at work with you to turn you from your sins, speaking to you by the word, providences, the secret checks of your own conscience, and secret motions and whispers within your own breast, but all to no purpose? This will not last: Gen. vi. 3. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. And it will have a doleful end, if ye do not repent: Is. lxiii. 10. They rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. If sinners continue to be a burden to the Spirit of God, and do not take off the burden by repentance, God will throw it off to their cost: Is. i. 24. Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.

5. Thou wrongest God by defacing the remains of his image in thy own soul. *God made man upright, after his own image. Adam's sin ruined this image in us. But the more we go on in sin, we render ourselves still the more unlike God, and the more contrary to him. How fearful is this, to be still blotting out any appearance of the treats of God's image in us?*

6. *lastly, Thou wrongest God by the ill influence your example has on others. Hence says our Lord, Matth. xxiv. 12. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Every impenitent sinner is an agent for the devil, and invites and encourages others to despise God and his ways, and so will be made to reckon for the mischief his sin does that way. The rich man in hell was sensible of this, though it would seem not before, Luke xvi. 27. 28. I pray thee, father, (said he to Abraham), that thou wouldst send him [Lazarus] to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

Now, will ye go on, thus wronging God by your sin, and not turn from it unto him? Consider, I pray you,

1. He is your Creator, *Eccl. xii. 1. He gave you a being, and brought you out of the womb of nothing, and will ye not be for him? will ye be against him? Has not he that made you a right to rule you? does not reason itself say, that God's creating us gives him a sovereign domi-*
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nion over us? O why will the creature thus set itself against the Creator? Will the potsherds strive against the potter?

2. He is your Preserver, *Heb. i. 3. Acts xvii. 28.* You live on his earth, feed on his good creatures, breathe in his air, and will ye not hearken to his voice? Who was it that preserved thee in the womb, that brought thee out of it, so that it was not made thy grave? Who has kept the brittle thread of thy life from being broken hitherto, and fed thee all thy life long? Is it not the Lord? And wilt thou fight against him with his own benefits which he has bestowed on thee, yea, is bestowing on thee while thou goest on in thy sin? Shall the life, strength, comforts of life, time, &c. which he has given thee, be employed to the grieving of his Spirit? What will the end of these things be?

3. He can destroy you, and that when he will, *Matth. x. 28.* Your life and breath is from him, and he can stop it when he pleaseth. He does not suffer you to go on in your sin, because he cannot help it: nay, the moment thou provokest him, he can strike thee dead, or send thee down alive into the pit. But he waits to be gracious. And this one consideration might determine sinners to repent, if madness were not in their hearts, setting them to provoke him, who in a moment can destroy them, and make them silent in the grave.

4. He is your Witness, *Psal. li. 4. Luke xv. 18.* Sinners that like not to retain God in their knowledge, do in effect please themselves with the notion that God is closed up in heaven, *Ezek. ix. 9. For they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.* But the day comes when they will see themselves miserably deceived. No; he is a witness, though many times a silent witness; but he will speak in due time, *Psal. l. 21. 22.* The opening of the book of conscience, and of God's remembrance, will clear his being a witness of your whole way and every step of it.

5. lastly, He will be your Judge, *2 Cor. v. 10.* And he is an omniscient one, from whom nothing can be hid; a just one, that will reward every one according to his works; an omnipresent one, from whose presence there can be no escape; an omnipotent one, who can without fail make his sentence take effect. Will men pretend to believe a judgment to come, and yet be at no pains to make the Judge their friend aforehand, but keep up the war against him, and not break it off by repentance? Alas! horrid unbelief is at the bottom of impenitency.

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Mot. 7. God is calling you to repentance. Be not deaf to the calls of God, lest the Lord pay home your rebellion, by refusing to hear you when ye call to him, *Prov. i. 24.* and downwards. God is calling you to repentance,

1. By the mercies wherewith he is daily loading you. *Quot beneficia, tot ora. Rom. ii. 4. Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* These are the cords of a man wherewith God is drawing you. That you have a sparing on God's earth, that you are kept out of hell, that he gives you daily bread, and does not lock up heaven and earth that they may not help you, call aloud to you to repent, and turn to him. And he takes notice how little these prevail, *Jer. v. 24. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.*

2. God is calling you to repentance by the crosses and afflictions, either laid on you, or threatened. Every cross providence is a messenger from Heaven calling you to repentance: *Mic. vi. 9. Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.* They meet you in the way of sin, as the angel did *Balaam*; they bid you halt, and go no farther on; nay, they bid you return to the Lord. God is speaking to the land this way, to this church, and to the congregation, and to every one of us, at this day.

3. God is calling you to repentance by the preaching of the word, *Acts xvii. 30.* This is the great scope of all our preaching, that ye may repent and turn from your sins unto God. And while God continues the gospel with us, it is a sign he is waiting for our repentance: but to continue in sin over the belly of all warnings, will have a fatal end to take us from the gospel, or the gospel from us; which we have ground to fear at this day on more accounts than one. Hence says Christ to the church of *Ephesus*, *Rev. ii. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*

Mot. ult. Consider the text, *Except ye repent, ye shall perish.* There are two things in this to press you to repentance.

1. If ye repent not, ye shall perish. Sin unrepented of, brings ruin upon kingdoms, churches, congregations, families. And that is like to be the ruin of our land, and of our church,

church, at this day. For, alas! the face of all at this day is like that described *Jer. viii. 6. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.* God has threatened us with desolating strokes, and is yet threatening; but the generation is like to those scoffers spoken of *2 Pet. iii. 4. saying, Where is the promise of his coming?* And because God does not speedily execute the sentence, therefore men cast off fear, and go on in their sins, in defiance of Heaven. But that concerns us nearly: *Jer. ix. 9. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Sin unrepented of will ruin your souls; *Except ye repent, ye shall perish.* Consider, your life, your souls lie at stake. Sinner, thou hast gone away from God, thy soul is left in pawn that thou shalt return by repentance. If thou return not, thy pawn, thy soul is lost, lost for ever. Heaven's gate is too narrow to let you in there with a burden of unrepented-of sin on thy back. Nay, heaven thou canst never see; hell thou canst not escape, if thou repent not. The gospel calls you to repent; if not, *the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on you that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. i. 7. 8.* Have pity therefore on your souls, *Ezek. xviii. 31. 32. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.* To this narrow point the matter is brought, Repent, or perish eternally; quit your sins, or quit heaven.

Now, I pray you consider here,

1st, The certainty of your ruin in an impenitent state. Ye have it from the mouth of the Lord himself, in most plain and peremptory terms, that *except ye repent, ye shall perish.* If it were but a may-be, it were sufficient in all reason to determine us to repentance; for it is unaccountable to put the soul in hazard of everlasting destruction, for all the profit or pleasure of a sinful course; a thousand times more than for one to put himself in hazard of drowning to catch a fly. But it is not a may-be, but certainly it shall be.

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2dly, All other grounds of hope are cut off, if ye repent not. Tell me, O impenitent sinner, that will not turn from thy sin, what wilt thou trust to for salvation from the wrath of God? Wilt thou trust to the mercy of God? I tell thee thou art a despiser of mercy, *Rom. ii. 4.*; and thou cannot have it in this case, but over the belly of the truth of God; for he has said, *Except ye repent, ye shall perish.* Pray consider, if thou wouldst have mercy, thou must seek it in God's way: *Is. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Wilt thou trust to Jesus Christ, his blood and merits? Do not deceive yourself. Is not this Christ's own word, *Except ye repent, ye shall perish?* does not the Saviour tell thee this? *Q. d.* None of my blood shall ever be wared on a sinner to save him from wrath, that will not repent and turn from his sin. Why does any body at all perish that hears the gospel, if folk may continue impenitent, and yet share of Christ's blood? No, no; to whom Christ will be a Saviour from wrath, he will be first a Saviour from sin, *Matth. i. 21.* He will first give repentance, before he give access to heaven; for Christ's blood was never shed to bring in dogs and swine into his Father's house, but shed, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14.*

3dly, Where will the fruit of sin be, when this dear reckoning begins? *Heb. x. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Thou mayst get a time to run thy course: but at length thy eye-strings will break, the last pulse beat, and the soul will take wing and go to another world, and because of unrepented-of sin, be condemned to everlasting flames. And when thou enters there, what will abide with thee of all the satisfaction thou hast had in thy sinful courses? No; then thou must bid an eternal farewell to all satisfaction, ease, or delight whatsoever, either in God or thy lusts.

4thly, How wilt thou be able to stand under the load of wrath in the pit of destruction? *Is. xxxiii. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* How wilt thou be able to grapple with vengeance, the Mediator's vengeance, while God shall hold thee up with the one hand, and punish thee

thee with the other? Think in time on the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched: for either thou must repent now, or that worm will gnaw thee, and that fire scorch thee for ever.

Lastly, Consider the eternity of this state. The pleasure, profit, and ease of sin are but for a moment; but the destruction for sin unrepented of is for ever, *2 Thess. i. 9.* O madness! to run the risk of everlasting pain for a moment's pleasure! If ruing, sorrow, remorse, rage against one's self for sin, were repenting, there would be repentance enough in hell. Men stave off repentance now for the bitterness of it; but there is a sweet in it too: but then ye shall have the bitterness of it in full measure, but never taste of the sweetness of it; for then the hopes of mercy are razed; and a fearful sight of an everlasting continuance of misery, without end.

Have pity then on your own souls, and throw them not away for that which cannot profit.

2. If ye repent, ye shall never perish. Repentance is the way to keep off the wrath of God from nations, churches, &c. Repentance is the way for each of us to escape the wrath of God: *Ezek. xviii. 30. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.* *Acts ii. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* All the threatenings of wrath are summons to repent, and have always that clause understood in them, *Except ye repent, ye shall perish*: *Rev. ii. 22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.* Though ye have sinned with the world, if ye repent with God's elect, ye shall not perish with the world. Consider,

1st, It is not falling into sin, but lying in sin without repentance, that ruins folk to whom the gospel comes, *John iii. 19.* For there is a remedy provided; and it is for all diseases of the soul, even the worst and most desperate: and so nothing can be fatal to those that are willing to employ the Physician, and to undergo his method of cure. They are in glory this day, whose sins have been of the first magnitude, as *David, Paul, Manasseh, Peter, &c.*; but they were repenting sinners.

2^{dly}, There is mercy for thee, if thou wilt repent, and come to Christ. Good news, O sinners, If ye repent, all your sins shall be blotted out, ye shall be embraced in the

wide and warm arms of mercy ; if, as ye have gone away from God, so ye will come back again : *Is. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* *Rev. iii. 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock : If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* O sirs, will not bowels of mercy draw you ? God is now on a throne of mercy ; he stretches out the golden sceptre to you for peace, if ye will have it in his own way : and in his name we proclaim mercy to all poor sinners that desire to turn from their sins unto God. O will not the proclamation of the indemnity touch the hearts of rebel-sinners, and cause them to relent ?

Object. 1. But my sins are many and great sins. *Ans.* God's mercies are many, *Psal. li. 1.* and great too, *Psal. lxxxvi. 13.* ; and his mercy is magnified in pardoning of such. If thy sins were as great as mountains, as many as the catalogue of them would reach from heaven to earth, there is mercy for thee, if thou wilt repent : *Is. i. 18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll.* There is riches of mercy, *Eph. ii. 4. abundance of pardoning grace, Is. lv. 7.*

Object. 2. I have relapsed, gone back with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire. *Ans.* There is mercy for backsliders too : *Jer. iii. 14. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. Vers. 22. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* If it were not so, who could be safe ? Men must forgive in that case, and much more God will, *Luke xvii. 4.* For as the heavens are above the earth, so are God's thoughts above ours : *Jer. iii. 1. They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again ? shall not that land be greatly polluted ? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers ; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.*

Object. 3. But I have despised and slighted mercy, and the remedy of sin. *Ans.* They had gone all that length, who had so far despised mercy, and the remedy of sin, as they had murdered the Lord of glory, and yet they obtained mercy,

cy, *Acts* ii. 36. 37. 38. Despise and slight it no more, and your former sins shall not be remembered.

Object. 4. I have so long gone on in sin, that I can have no hope. *Ans.* The longer the greater is your sin; yet God has not discovered to us any particular time, beyond which he will not wait. There are some called at the eleventh hour; and those that come in then, are not rejected. So was the thief on the cross. See *Ezek.* xxxiii. 10. 11. *Luke* xiv. 22. *Joel* iii. 21.

Object. 5. But there is no body's case like mine. *Ans.* Consider the case of *Manasseh*, 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. and of *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* i. 13. Such instances are designed to encourage sinners to repent in hopes of mercy, *Eph.* ii. 7. *Adam's* case was more hopeless, who had sinned against more light and mercy, than ye were capable to do. But suppose your case is a non-such evil, the mercy of God and the blood of Christ are non-such remedies. And ye may be sure, since he has said, *John* vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, that he will work a new thing on the earth, rather than that your case be unhelped, if ye will put it in his hand. So I conclude that there is mercy for you, if ye will repent,

Lastly, Thou shalt certainly be saved for ever, if thou dost repent: *Ezek.* xviii. 30. *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.* No true penitents go to hell. Heaven is the landing place of all true penitents. They that turn from their sins now, and turn unto God, shall for ever be with the Lord in another world.

O look to the glory that is above, and let your souls be moved to repentance by it. Cast not away the hopes of eternal happiness for what does not profit.

Now, sinners, consider these things, and be stirred up to repentance, and do not adventure over the belly of fair warning to go on in a course of impenitency. Impenitency under the gospel is a sin of a deep dye; beware of it.

1. It is a continuation of sin; it draws out the thread of a God-provoking course, adding sin to sin, till God cut the thread of life. And O are there not enough of *items* standing in God's accounts against you already? why will ye be still adding more, instead of diminishing and breaking off the course by repentance?

2. It seals sin and guilt on your soul. Impenitency keeps all the rest of your sins fast on your souls: *John* iii. 19. *This*

is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. If you would repent, no sins whatsoever you are guilty of should ever be able to ruin you: but if you do not, that one will keep all the rest in life and vigour, to your utter ruin.

3. It lies in the face of the gospel, of Christ himself, his apostles and ministers, who with one voice call sinners to repentance. If ye do this, ye do all; if ye do not this, ye do nothing; ye receive the grace of God in vain; it will be in vain to you that ever you heard the gospel, that Christ died for sinners, &c.; for ye will have no benefit by any of these things.

4. *lastly*, It is a bloody sin, that will involve you in everlasting misery. For there is no escaping of the wrath of God, if ye do not repent; ye are undone for ever. For *except ye repent, ye shall perish*.

Now, ye have had a message from the Lord, what answer shall I return to him that sent me? I think I may rank up all in these six sorts of sinners.

1. The brutish sinner, that hears as if he heard not. The word makes a noise in their ears, because they are capable of hearing; but, alas! they are no better than the beasts, in so far as they make no reflections on it, with respect to their state and case. What shall I say to you, but that the time comes when these souls of yours, drowned in a moss of flesh and blood, will be separate from your bodies, and get a long eternity to reflect on the calls ye have had to repent? *Is. i. 3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Psal. xxxii. 9. 10. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.*

2. The sullen desperate sinner, whose answer will be that, *Jer. ii. 25. There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* Their hearts are glued to their sins, they have no will to part with them, and they have no hope that ever they shall be made willing, or if they were so, that God would receive them; and therefore they are resolved to take their time. But O consider, they have been reformed that have been as mad on their idols as you as *Manasseh* and *Paul*. If that cannot draw you, pray answer that question, *Is. xxxiii. 14. Who among us shall dwell*

with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

3. The crafty subtle sinner, whose answer will be that of Saul to Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 13. *Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* But let the return to them be that of Samuel to Saul, vers. 14. *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?* What means your continuing in sin, your not wrestling and striving against it in heart and life, if it be so?

4. The presumptuous sinner, whose answer will be that, Deut. xxix. 19. *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart.* There are some who have a heart of adamant, and put on a forehead of brass, that nothing of this sort can affect them. Let the messengers of the Lord be saying what they will, they will be doing. They will have their course, and persuade themselves all shall be well. To such I would say, as vers. 20. 21. *The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in this book of the law.* See Is. xxviii. 16. and downwards.

5. The slothful sinner, whose answer will be that of Felix to Paul, Acts xxiv. 25. *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* They are convinced that they must repent, and resolve to do it, but not yet. Young folk put it off to old age; old folk delay it till a death-bed. Every one puts it off from time to time. But O sirs what certainty have ye of an hour, let be of a year? How many are there that never see old age? How many drop into eternity ere ever they are aware?

6. lastly, The convinced sinner, who being awakened, says, *What shall I do to be saved?* For which reason I shall,

III. Shew you the great hinderances of repentance. And,

1. Thoughtlessness is a great hinderance of it: Jer. viii. 6. *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.* Men do not consider their souls state, case, and way. They sleep away their time carelessly without due reflection; and therefore their spiritual state

goes to wreck, and they pine away in their iniquity, and are not aware of the same.

2. The love and cares of the world are great hinderances of repentance, *Luke viii. 14.* These take up mens hearts so, as that they have neither heart nor hand for the care of their souls. How many are there, whom the world keeps in a constant hurry all their life long, that they never come to consider their way till death stare them in the face?

3. Prejudices against religion and seriousness are great hinderances of repentance. Some see no profit in it; but *godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv.*

8. Some see no pleasure in it; but *wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii.*

17. Some think that it is needless to be at all that pains, far less will serve: but, alas! they do not consider what a holy jealous God the Lord is, and how many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

4. Presumption is a great hinderance of repentance, *Deut. xxix. 19.* They hope still all shall be well, however they take their liberty in a sinful course. They abuse the mercy of God as a screen to their lusts; not remembering that *he will by no means clear the guilty.*

5. Unbelief, the not embracing of Christ, and apprehending the mercy of God in him, is likewise a great impediment in the way of repentance. And,

6. *lastly*, Slothfulness, whereby the business is still put off from time to time.

IV. I shall give directions in order to your obtaining repentance. Supposing what I have said before of the way to gain repentance by believing, I offer further these following directions;

1. Labour to see sin in its own colours, what an evil thing it is, *Jer. ii. 19.* What makes us to cleave to sin, is false apprehensions we have about it. To see it in itself would be a means to make us fly from it. For this end consider,

1st, The majesty of God offended by sin. Ignorance of God is the mother of impenitency, *Acts xvii. 30.*

2^{dly}, The obligations we lie under to serve him, which by sin we trample upon.

3^{dly}, The wrath of God that abides impenitent sinners.

4^{thly}, The good things our unrepented-of sins deprive

us of.

Lastly,

Lastly, The many evils which are bred by our sin against the honour of God, our own and our neighbour's true interest.

2. Be much in the thoughts of death. Consider how short and uncertain your time is. Hopes of long life bring many into a hopeless case. And who knows when he may have outlived his day of grace, when the moment comes that God shall say, *My spirit shall not strive any more with this man, for that he also is flesh?*

3. Dwell on the thoughts of a judgment to come, where ye shall be made to give an account of yourselves.

4. Meditate on the sufferings of Christ.

5. Pray for repentance, and believingly seek and long for the Lord's giving the new heart, according to his promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* *Vers. 32. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.*

6. *lastly*, What ye do, do quickly. The sooner you begin, the easier will the work be.

Take the three following marks of true repentance.

1. Sorrow for sin, as offensive to a good and gracious God, *Zech. xii. 10.*

2. Hatred of sin, as the most abominable thing, *Rev. ii.*

6. This will be, 1. universal, against all known sin; 2. constant, without intermission; 3. implacable, without reconciliation; and, 4. vehement, without tolerating of it.

3. A fixed purpose and desire of eschewing sin, and following of duty; guarding against present sins, and the occasions of these we are in hazard of; honestly endeavouring after it in the use of means, and labouring to remove the hinderances to a holy life.

The Danger of delaying REPENTANCE.

PROV. vi. 10. 11.

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

I Have been pressing sinners to repentance from the former text, and I hope by this time all of you may be convinced of the necessity of it. But, alas! delays in this matter kills their ten thousands. Men put off the work from time to time, till time be gone, and they are surprised into ruin, as we may learn from this text. Where,

1. We have the sluggard's picture drawn, in reference to his eternal concerns; which is the main thing here aimed at. He is one that puts off his great work from time to time, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.*

In the 6th verse the slothful sinner is set to school to learn a lesson of the emmot; which though she has not the advantages that he has, yet has so much natural sagacity, as to provide for winter, in the time of summer and harvest, when meat is to be got. In the 9th verse there is a rousing call to the sinner to follow that example. But behold how he entertains it; as a person that is loth to arise, he begs *a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.* Here is,

1st, Something supposed; and that is threefold.

(1.) The sleeper convinced that he has slept, and neglected his work. There are many who see themselves wrong, yet have no heart to endeavour to get right. They are convinced that their great work is far behind, yet have no heart to stir to set it forward.

(2.) The sleeper convinced that he must awake, and set to his work. Slothful sinners may see that the case they are in, is not a case they would venture to die in: they see that it is necessary to turn over a new leaf, to mind their

their salvation at another rate than they have done, or are doing.

(3.) The sleeper resolved to awake, and mind his business. He would fain sleep, but he does not design to sleep long, to sleep always. No; he designs but a little sleep, if ye will believe him, and afterwards to awake; though, poor soul, he does not consider that he is sleeping within the sea-mark, and may be swallowed up ere he awake out of his little sleep.

2dly, Something expressed; and that is threefold too.

(1.) A delay craved: *Yet a little sleep, &c.* He is not thinking never to waken, never to repent, but only he cannot think on doing it as yet. However long a sleep he has taken in sin, yet he must have more. For as men, the more they sleep, the more they would sleep; so the more they continue in sin, the more they would continue. And the more they put off repentance, they are the more unfit for it.

(2.) The quantity of this delay: It is but a *little* in the sluggard's conceit. Though the Spirit of the Lord be grieved and wearied with waiting on his awakening, yet he thinks that all is but little. If the sluggard considered that his whole time is but little in comparison of eternity, the least time he spends in his sleep would appear very great. But, alas! he considers it not.

(3.) The mighty concern he is in for this delay. Though his ruin be wrapt up in it, he is fond of it, his heart is set upon it; and he pleads for it, as a starving man for bread. Ease is sweet to him; and so he speaks, *A little sleep, a little slumber.* There are three things here which he craves, each less than the other; which shows how loath he is to bestir himself. (1.) *A little sleep*; not a dead sleep, but a moderate one. (2.) If that cannot be granted, let him have but *a little slumber*; a napping, as it were a middle betwixt sleeping and waking. (3.) If he cannot get that, yet he would have *a folding of the hands to sleep*; Heb. *to lie abed*. Let him but lie still loitering, and embracing his sweet self, and not presently be obliged to rise to put hand to work. Love to folded hands goes deep with him.

Observe, how the hearts of sinners are glued to their sins, and carnal security. When conscience begins to draw them out of their bed of sloth, they will not yield, they will dispute every foot of ground with it. And they will take very little ere they want all. O were we as nice in

the point of our salvation, as in the state of blindness, in the point of our ruin, how happy might we be?

2. We have the fatal issue of this course. Delays are dangerous, but most of all in matters of eternal concern. The issue of these delays is, The man is ruined, he never awakes till it is out of time. His *little sleep*, &c. spends all his little time, and throws him out quite unprovided into a long eternity. Here consider,

1st, What ruin comes upon him: *Poverty and want*. It is held forth under these notions, to answer to the provision the ants make for themselves. They provide for themselves in summer and harvest; so that when the winter comes, when they cannot stir out of their holes, they live on the provision they have laid in. There is a winter abiding us, a time wherein no man can work, when there will be no access to God's grace and favour. Death brings in this. This time is our summer and harvest, wherein matters may be secured for eternity: but, alas! the sluggard sleeps in working time; and so when it is over, he must starve, and perish for ever.

2^{dly}, How this ruin comes upon him. It comes on,

(1.) Swiftly and speedily. So the word rendered *one that travelleth*, imports: one that walketh vigorously, as a man in a haste upon the road. Though the sinner lies at ease on his bed of sloth, yet his ruin hasteth on apace, 2 Pet. ii. 3. The sun stands not still, though the sluggard's work goes slowly on. Every breath he fetches in his spiritual sleep, draws his destruction a step nearer.

(2.) Silently and surprisingly: *Thy poverty shall come as one that travelleth*. If we send one on an errand, we will be looking for him again at the time appointed; but we know nothing of the traveller, till he come at us. So ruin comes on the delaying sinner ere he is aware; destruction is at his bedside ere he is awakened, Prov. xxix. 1.

(3.) Irresistibly: *Thy want shall come as an armed man*; Heb. *a man of a buckler*, who may hurt thee; but not thou him, for his buckler defends him. Were this traveller unarmed, the danger were not so great; or were the party attacked watching, and armed too, he might possibly come off safe. But, alas! the poor man is naked, and sleeping too; how then can he make his part good against his enemy? He cannot; he must fall a sacrifice to his own sloth. Which brings me to consider,

3^{dly}, What all this is owing to: *So shall thy poverty come*.

come as one that travelleth, &c. It is all owing to the cursed love of ease, to sloth, to the delays and put-offs, where-with precious time is squandered away, and the precious soul is irrecoverably lost. They delay and delay on, till the golden opportunity is lost, and they are swept away into the pit, with all their good resolutions for the time to come, which they never see.

The point I intend to speak to from these words, is,

Doct. *The delaying and putting off of repentance or salvation-work, is a soul-ruining course among gospel-hearers.*

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. Why it is that gospel-hearers delay and put off repentance.

II. That this delaying is a soul-ruining course.

III. *Lastly*, Make application.

I. I shall shew *why it is that gospel-hearers delay and put off repentance*. There is a generation that are not resolved never to repent, never to ply salvation-work; but only they are not for it yet. They hope to mend and reform afterwards, but for the present they have no heart to it: so by cheating themselves out of their present time, they put a cheat on themselves for ever. They are called by the word, and by their own consciences, to make ready for another world, to work out their salvation; but their hearts say, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*; and their practice is conform. Why is it so?

1. Satan has a great hand in this. If he cannot hold out the light altogether from disturbing them, he will do what he can to lull them asleep again, before they be fully awakened: *Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.* Thus he did with Felix, *Acts xxiv. 25.* who, as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, trembled, and answered, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* When the soul begins to think on making its escape, all the art of hell will be employed to hold it fast; and it is easier to get one to put off salvation-work till afterwards, than downright to refuse it altogether. And thus Satan is always on one of the two extremes, urging either that it is too soon, or else that it is too long a-doing.

2. The cares and business of the world contribute much to this. Hence our Lord explained *the seed which fell among thorns*, to be those, who when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection, Luke viii. 14. How often are people in such an unsanctified throng of business, that they cannot find a convenient season for putting their salvation-work to a point? They have so many other cares upon their heads, that they juggle out the care of their souls. They find themselves wrapt up in a cloud of cares; but think with themselves, that were they but once through that, they shall ply their main work. Well, but they are no sooner out of that, than they are in to another; and so on, till the work being put off from time to time, is quite neglected. The truth is, persons in such a case will hardly find a time for that work, till they be resolute that they shall take it as they can find it.

3. The predominant love of carnal ease: *Prov. xxvi. 15. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom, it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.* We are all naturally like *Issachar*, who saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute, Gen. xlix. 15. Could people get sleeping to heaven on the sluggard's bed, would drowsy wishes carry them thither, many would be the passengers in that way. But that will not do. Men must labour, strive, and wrestle; and that is hard in the eyes of carnal men; and therefore, if it cannot be altogether refused, it is put off as long as may be. And hence never will a soul ply salvation-work in earnest, till it be effectually roused out of its lazy disposition.

4. The predominant love of sin. Why do persons slave off repentance, but because they are like those who entertaining their friends whom they have no will to part with, do therefore put off their departure from day to day? The parting with sin is like the cutting off of a member of the body, *Matth. v. 30*; which one will never yield to, unless he be very resolute. No man will delay a minute to throw a burning coal out of his bosom; but they will love to keep a sweet morsel under the tongue, who yet know that they must spit it out at length. And hence it is, that no purpose of reformation, which is only for afterwards, can be sincere; because it argues a love to, and loathsomeness to part with sin.

5. A natural aversion and backwardness to holiness: *Rom.*

viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* The heart will never be reconciled to the yoke of Christ, till grace make it so, *Psal. cx. 3.* But like as the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke is loath to stoop to it, and therefore still draws aback; so will the heart of man do, till overcoming grace reach it, *Jer. xxxi. 18.* Hence, when light is let into the mind, but the aversion still remains in the will; what can be expected, but that the business of repentance, which they dare not absolutely refuse, will be delayed?

6. The hope of finding the work easier afterwards. The sluggard thinks with himself, that a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, would make it easier to him to get out of his bed; though, on the contrary, the more he sleeps unseasonably, the more he would sleep; and the longer persons delay the work of repentance, it is the harder to go through with it. For sin is a disease, which, the longer it lasts, gathers the more strength, and is harder to cure. And he that is not fit to-day to repent, will be less fit to-morrow.

7. A large reckoning on the head of time that is to come: Hence the rich man reckoned, *I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But let us hear the judgment of God concerning this speech: *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* *Luke xii. 19. 20.* God has given no man a tack of years, no nor hours; yet every body is ready to tell what they will do to-morrow, next month, or next year. The young people think they have a great deal of time before their hand for repentance; the old people think they have enough before them for that too: and in people's conceit there is always enough, till their time be gone quite, and they be wakened out of their dream. Hopes of long life have ruined many a soul. O to be wise! *James iv. 13. 14.* *Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.* But what folly is it to venture eternity on such uncertainty!

8. A fond conceit of the easiness of salvation-work. There is a generation that please themselves with the thought, that
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it is but to believe and repent, and that is soon done. What persons can do with a touch of their hand, they think they need to be in no haste with. But O how contrary is this to the whole strain of Scripture, and the saints experience? *Matth. vii. 14. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Eph. i. 19. 20.* The Apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of God's power toward them who believe, according to the working of his mighty power; which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. *1 Pet. iv. 18. If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Did men believe this, that there is such a difficulty in getting to heaven, they would not dare delay for a minute entering on the way.

9. A conceit of sufficient ability in ourselves to turn ourselves from sin unto God. That the doctrine advancing the power of natural reason and ability in spiritual things, does take so much with the world, is no wonder, since man naturally is such a stranger to his own spiritual impotency. Hence it is observed, that the first question with the awakened is, *What shall I do to be saved?* It is worth observing how the carnal heart turns itself into different shapes, to retain its sinful lusts. Sometimes the man says, that he is not able to do any good; but when his sin cannot find shelter under this covert, but he is pursued hot with conviction, he puts off his reformation and repentance to another time; thereby in effect declaring that he can do it, if he had but a season for it. He that is to use his oars may row at what hour he pleases; but he that must sail by the help of wind, must set off while it blows, because he cannot command it.

II. I shall shew that this delaying is a soul-ruining course.

This is evident, if ye consider,

1. It is directly opposite to the gospel-call; which is for to-day, not for to-morrow: *Heb. iii. 7. 8. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* All the calls of the gospel require present compliance, and do not allow sinners to put off till another day. It is true, salvation-work must be deliberate work; but ye are not allowed a time to deliberate whether ye will come to Christ and be holy or no. It is like the call to quench fire in a house, that must presently

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be done, yet done deliberately, so as the work be not marred in the making. How then can it be but a soul-ruining course?

2. It is threatened with ruin. The text is very express, *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.* And one with a thousand times more safety might venture on a sword-point, than the edge of such a divine threatening. See *Prov. xxiii. 21. Eccl. x. 18.* And this threatening has been accomplished in many, whom their slothful delays have caused to perish; as in the case of *Ephraim, Hos. xiii. 13.* and of *Felix, Acts xxiv. 25.* Many have been not far from the kingdom of God, who yet never came to it.

3. Whenever grace touches the heart, men see that it is so. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. cxix. 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.* When men are in earnest to get in to Christ by faith, and to get back to God by repentance, they dare linger no more in the state of wrath, they flee out of it, as one fleeing for his life, *Matth. iii. 7.* Their eyes are opened to see their danger, and therefore they are presently determined.

4. It has a native tendency to soul-ruin, which inevitably overtakes them, if they do not at length break off all delays, and come away. This is evident, if ye consider,

1st, The state of sin is a state of wrath, where ruin must needs compass a man about on every hand: *John iii. 36. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* To have staid in Sodom that day it was to be burnt, was dangerous; but to abide a moment in the state of wrath, is far more dangerous. Who would venture into a house that is about to fall? who would not presently leave it? And will men venture yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, in a state of enmity with God? Surely such persons know not God's greatness, nor the worth of their own souls.

2^{dly}, The longer ye continue in sin, your spiritual death advanceth the more upon you. Every sin sets you a step farther from God, is a new bar in the way of your peace with him, strengthens your natural enmity against him, and alienates you more from the life of God. And where can this natively end, but in your souls ruin? Ah! are we not far enough on in that way already? why delay more, that we may go yet farther off from God?

3^{dly},

3dly, While ye remain in this state, there is but a step betwixt you and death, which you may be carried over by a delay of ever so short a time. All that is your security in this case, so far as ye can see, is the brittle thread of your life, which may be broken with a touch, and then ye are ruined without remedy. So that every delay, shorter or longer, of repentance, is a venturing of eternity on that uncertain life of yours, which in a moment may be taken from you.

USE. I. For Information. This lets us see,

1. That delayers of repentance are self-destroyers, self-murderers. Well may it be said to such, as *Ezek. xviii. 31. Why will ye die?* Should a man wilfully neglect a remedy for his disease, which puts him in hazard of his life, he could not be guiltless of his own death; more than one who being called to rise and quench the fire in his house, and yet would lie still till it were consumed to ashes, would be blameless of its ruin. Self-love, that is, love of sinful self, is the source of the greatest cruelty; whereby lusts are spared to the destruction of the life of the soul.

2. By delays the interest of hell is advanced; where many are this day who had resolved to repent, but death did not wait their time, and so they were disappointed. No wonder new grounds of delay be still laid to persons hands, for it is Satan's great drift to get men intangled in the wilderness, that they may not make forward to *Canaan's* land. And every new intanglement sets the soul a step nearer to destruction: and who questions but Satan has art enough to coin new pretences for delays?

3. No wonder Satan is most busy to ply the engine of delays, when a sinner is somewhat awakened by conviction; as he did with *Felix*, *Acts xxiv. 25. A soft answer turneth away wrath*; and delays will blunt the edge of convictions, as much as a peremptory refusal. Under convictions, at a sermon, or on a sick-bed, the sinner is awakened out of his sleep; but then nothing can serve Satan's purpose better, than yet a little sleep; which if they get, they sleep off the edge of convictions.

4. They are sinners best friends, that give them least rest in a sinful course. And whatever men think of them now, they will think so afterwards, *Prov. v. 11. 12. 13.* Every body loves ease, and therefore faithful preaching and dealing with souls, is a torment to those who love to be undisturbed

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turbed in their rest in sin, *Rev. xi. 10.* But what suits best with our sinful inclinations, is worst for our souls, and will in the end be found so. Flattery has ruined many, when plain dealing and fair warning has brought many out of the snare.

USE. 2. Of Lamentation. We may lament here the case of many, nay of most, that hear the gospel. They put off their work from time to time, and so their spiritual case is going to wreck day by day. This is the case in natural things: *Ecc. x. 18. By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.* They are in a dying condition, the physician comes to their bed-side, and offers them a remedy; they do not absolutely refuse it, only they put off the taking of it. In the mean time their distemper increaseth, and death is advancing apace. The market of free grace is opened, and they are called to come and buy; they see they need to buy, yet they are not like to stir till the market be over. O madness and folly to be lamented with tears of blood! Poor slothful creature, that is yet for a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, there are four things thou knowest not.

1. Thou knowest not the worth of a precious soul, which thou art throwing away for what will not profit. Will the sweet sleep in sin quit the cost of the soul's ruin? No, no: *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* *Matth. xvi. 26.* Christ left the bosom of the Father, and shed his precious blood to redeem the soul. He was wise that paid the price; and if less would have done, he would not have been at needless expence of blood: he was a Father that received it; and would not have put his Son to that, if it had not been necessary. Satan goes about without intermission to ruin it. But what low thoughts dost thou entertain of it, that wilt not break thy rest to save it from ruin?

2. Thou knowest not the excellency of precious Christ; sleep locks up thine eyes that thou canst not see the ravishing sight, *John i. 10.* The eyes of saints and angels are fixed on him, as the glory of the upper house: the eyes opened here by grace, are arrested by his overcoming glory. Hence are these rapturous expressions in scripture, *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* *Cant. i. 3. Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured*

ed forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Zion's crowned King, is making his progress through the city where thou dwellest; the cry to come out and behold him, reaches thine ears, *Cant. iii. ult.*: but while he goes by, thou must have yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, and so thou lovest the sight. The royal Bridegroom stretches forth his hand unto thee, to espouse thee, saying, *Behold me, behold me*: thou openest thy drowsy eyes, and beginnest to stretch forth the hand; but sleep overcomes thee, thine eyes close, and thy hand falls down again, and the match is marred. The chariot of the covenant that is driving on to his Father's house, halts at thy door, and thou art called out; the ship is to sail to Immanuel's land, thou art called to come aboard: but yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep, and all is lost.

3. Thou knowest not the worth of precious time. The Apostle will have time redeemed, *Eph. v. 16.*; but thou squanderest it away, as a thing of no value; and working time is turned by thee into sleeping time. Precious moments slip away, and thou regardest not; though once gone, they can never be recalled. What would those who are past hope, give for an hour of that time, whereof thou lettest days, months, and years slip, without any improvement for eternity? O unhappy soul, who knowest not in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!

4. Thou knowest not the weight of the wrath of God. It is true none can have a full comprehension of it, *Psal. xc. 11.* *Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* But all the elect of God get such a notion of it, as rouses them up to fly from it, *2 Cor. v. 11.* *Knowing the terror of the Lord,* (says the Apostle), *we persuade men.* And if thou hadst tolerable apprehensions of it, it would break off thy sleep and slumber, and cause thee put forth thy hands to work. Didst thou consider what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and how when thou fallest down again into thy bed of sloth, thou art truly in hazard of it, it would give thee such a gliff as would keep thee waking.

There are three things thou dost not observe.

1. Thou dost not observe what speed thy ruin is making, while thou liest at ease; how thy judgment lingereth not, and thy damnation slumbereth not, *2 Pet. ii. 3.* The avenger of blood is pursuing thee, though thou art not fleeing from the wrath to come. Thou art like a man sleeping in a leaky ship, which is drawing water every moment, and within

within a little it will be full, and sink to the bottom of the sea, if he do not awake and help it. Every hour thy debt is growing, the cup of wrath is filling, and fills so much the faster, as thou art secure.

2. Thou dost not observe how near thy destruction may be. Thou art like the old world, who *were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away*, Matth. xxiv. 38. 39. Thy spiritual lethargy and dead sleep hinders thee from hearing the sound of the feet of the approaching stroke. Thou liest open to the most terrible surprise, to sleep the sleep of death, which thou mayst never awake out of till in hell, *Luke xii. 19. 20. and xvi. 23.* And O how sad is it for men to be past hope, ere they begin to fear; to have the house falling, ere they get over their bed!

3. Thou dost not observe how utterly unable thou art to ward off the blow when it comes: *Is. xxxiii. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Ezek. xxii. 14. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.* Can worm man stand before the almighty God, whose patience may be worn out ere thou awake? And if mercy and patience quit the field, justice will succeed into their room; and then there shall be no more sleeping, nor ease for ever.

USE. 3. Of Reproof to delayers of salvation-work. Why do ye go on in this soul-ruining course? Have ye no respect to the calls of the gospel, none to your souls, none to eternity? Why do not ye with all your might whatever your hand findeth to do? I would apply myself here,

1. To delaying saints.

2. To delaying sinners.

1. To delaying saints; for such there may be, and of such there are many at this day, *Cant. v. 2. 3.*; and our text is a general truth and warning. Spiritual sloth is so interwoven with our corrupt natures, that it will never be quite rooted out, till the corrupt nature be perfectly expelled. And as it remains in great measure in the saints, so it is fruitful of delays. There are these five delays incident even to the saints.

1. A delay of righting their case when matters are wrong, by renewing their repentance, and the actings of faith.

Sometimes their case is quite out of order; their graces are not in exercise; they are strangers to the Spirit's influences, and to access to and communion with God in duties. They have a secret dissatisfaction with this, and are resolved to get to their feet again; but sloth masters them, and the work is put off from time to time; as was the case with the spouse, *Cant. v. 2. 3. I sleep, but my heart waketh, (says she): it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

2. The delaying to give up with some bosom-idol that mars their communion with God, *Cant. iii. 1. Psal. lxi. 18.* They are convinced, that the harbouring of it does much harm to their souls case, and many resolutions they have to put the knife to the throat of it, but still they draw back their hand. And from one time to another the crucifying of it is put off; so that still it lives, like a waster in the candle, causing the soul's case go to wreck.

3. The delaying to clear their state before the Lord. They see need to have marches rid, and to be brought to a point whether they be in Christ or not, whether in a state of grace or not. They have resolutions to put it to a solemn trial; to examine themselves, and search what evidences they have for a title to heaven: but still the heart draws back, and the trial is put off.

4. The delaying of some particular duty, or piece of generation-work, which they are convinced God calls them to. They have often thoughts of setting about it in earnest; but still some one thing or other intervenes, and it is put off. They begin perhaps sometimes; but it is broken off again, and they must yet have *a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.*

5. Lastly, The delaying of actual preparation for eternity; like the virgins, *Matth. xxv. 5. who, while the bridegroom tarried, all slumbered and slept.* They see that it is no easy thing to die; they resolve to labour to put themselves through grace into a case for it; but day after day it is delayed. The lamps are not trimmed for meeting the Bridegroom. Though they be in a good state, they have not a dying frame.

To all such I would say, as *Jon. i. 6. What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think*

think upon thee, that thou perish not. Let me expostulate with you upon this head, O delaying saints.

1. Do ye find yourselves any thing the nearer your purpose by all your delays? Nay, the longer ye delay, do not ye find yourselves the farther from it? Does not your aversion and backwardness to duty grow upon you the more? and is not your confidence in the Lord still the more lessened? Yes; the more ye give yourselves to spiritual sleep, the more ye will desire to sleep.

2. Do not ye find this the way to rank poverty and want? Your consciences will witness the truth of that, that where the diligent shall abound with blessings, the idle soul shall suffer hunger. Is it with you as in months past? Have ye that sense and gust of religion, that access to God in duties, which ye have had when ye were doing with your might what your hand found to do?

3. Has not your poverty come upon you as one that travelleth? Have ye not been sometimes like *Samson* awaked out of *Delilah's* lap, and found your strength gone from you when you had most to do with it? Perhaps thou hast spent many days in estrangement from God, with much ease; but at length some strong temptation, or piercing trial has overtaken you; and then you have sucked the bitter sap of your slothful delays.

4. A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep, and the occasion may be lost, the opportunity for doing neglected duties may be lost. Either they may be taken from you, or ye from them. No man has a tack of his life, nor of occasions of doing good; and therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, Gal. vi. 10. And though the soul that is in Christ shall be saved surely, yet this will make the salvation to be so as by fire.

5. Lastly, The long-delayed work is hard work when it comes to the setting to, Cant. v. 5.—8. When the awakening comes, there may be little time, much opposition, and less strength than otherwise thou wouldst have had, and yet more to do with it than otherwise. The longer thy hand is from thy case, the more ravelled will it be. And it will readily occasion much fear, darkness, and perplexity, in a dying hour.

II. I would apply myself to delaying sinners, to those that are yet out of Christ, and have all to do for eternity

nity still. They are living in a state of wrath, and yet they linger, and put off their removal from *Sodom*. They delay repentance, and go on in their sin. I would say to you, as *Prov. vi. 9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* I must expostulate with you on this head.

First, Ye young people, why do ye delay repentance? why are ye like the wild asses colts, untractable and unteachable? No doubt, ye think it is too soon for you; that it may be time enough several years after this. Ye think repentance and seriousness suits best with the wrinkled brows, the pale face, and hollow eyes, &c.; that it is pity to spoil the bloom of youth with such work. When do ye mind to repent then? It is like, it is when ye are settled in the world, or when ye grow old; at least the days of youth must be over first. But, poor fool,

1. Is the debt of sin so small upon thy head, that thou must run thyself deeper in the debt of God's justice? Dost not thou know that thou wast born a child of wrath? *Eph. ii. 3.*; that thou broughtest that into the world with thee, that will damn thee, if thou repent not, and come to Christ? And will not that sink thee deep enough in destruction, though thou add no more to it, unless thou repent?

2. Is not the same holy law binding on thee, since thou couldst discern betwixt good and evil, that is binding on the oldest alive? Have the young a liberty to sin, and to cast off the fear of God and religion, more than the old? See *Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Here there is no exception. The follies of youth men may pass; but assure yourselves, God will not pass them: *Eccl. xi. 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* And I doubt not, but if ye saw your sinful thoughts, words, and actions, whether vain or vile, laid before you, as you must reckon for them at length, how few soever your years have been, you will see them to be more than the hairs on your heads, And I must tell you, that being yet unrenewed, and strangers to the life of grace, all your actions have been sin: *Prov. xxi. 4. An high look,*
and

and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked, is sin. And is it not then time to repent?

3. Who has assured thee, that ever thou shalt see the age thou speakest of? Go to the church-yard, and ye will see graves of all sizes, of your length and under. There are far more young corpses, than there are of those that carry gray hairs, ten to one *. Most men and women are cut off before they come to old age. What has befallen others as young and flourishing as you, may befall you too. And therefore, since ye know not but ye may die young, repent while ye are young, lest in the end ye find yourselves miserably disappointed.

4. Who has best right to your youth and strength? God or the devil? God is courting you for his own gift: *Eccl. xii. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.* Satan will labour to keep his possession. God is the first and last; and he required the first and best, the first-fruits, the first-born, the morning-sacrifice; and he requires the first of your days, and he takes pleasure therein: *Jer. ii. 2. I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* And will ye devote the first and best to sin and Satan, reserving the last and worst to your Creator?

5. Great is the advantage of those that get a gripe of religion while they are young, beyond others, in many respects. (1.) Readily their passage in the pangs of the new birth will be easier than that of others. In none is that scripture fulfilled more, *Mark iv. 27. of the seed's springing and growing up, none knoweth how,* than where grace joins with good education in young persons. The nail lately driven, draws easily in comparison of that which has been long rusted in. Where grace catches persons before they begin to dip into the gross pollutions of the world, it frees them of much remorse that these must occasion to those that have been led away with them. (2.) Young people's affections are easiest moved; and as they move easiest, so they move most vigorously, whatever way they be set. Hence they lie most fair for tasting the sweet of religion: *Hos. ii. 14. I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.* God sometimes dandling

* It is observed, by those who have accurately examined the records of the dead, that one half of mankind die before five years of age, and near a third more before twenty. How few then must arrive at old age?

young converts upon the knees, and giving them sensible tastes of the pleasure of religion, is agreeable to the particular promise made for their encouragement, *Prov. viii. 17. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early, shall find me.* (3.) They are in the fairest way to have most access to serve God in their generation. Suppose a man to be converted when he is old, his salvation will be secure; but, alas! his time for serving God's honour in the world is almost gone ere he puts hand to work.

6. *lastly*, God commands you to repent presently, and therefore it is on the peril of your soul, that ye venture to delay a moment longer: *Heb. iii. 7. 8. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Remember that word, *Eccel. xi. 9. 10. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.* A sinful youth will at length make a sad soul. Ye know not how soon God may be provoked against you to cut you off, if you delay. Monuments of the Lord's anger have been set up in childhood and youth, as well as in old age. Witness the children at *Bethel*, *2 Kings ii. 23. 24.*

Let not Satan deceive you, as if there were no pleasure in religion. No; *Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii. 17.* There is a sweet in religion a thousand times preferable to all the pleasures and vanities youth gades after.

Secondly, Ye middle-aged people, why do ye delay repentance? why do not ye think with yourselves seriously, where ye are like to take up your eternal lodging, and prepare for eternity by repentance? No doubt ye think ye have time enough too; but no time at present, for ye have another thing ado, the care of a family upon your heads, *Luke xiv. 20.* When is your term-day of repentance? It is like it is when ye shall have more time than now, or when ye grow old. But, O Sirs,

1. What know ye that ever you shall see old age? Yea what dost thou know, but, as *Luke xii. 20. this night thy soul shall be required of thee?* Alas! shall men thus from time to time venture their eternal state upon a mere uncertainty? Thy life is but a day, a short day, a winter-day,
and

and thou hast a long journey to go ; thy forenoon is past already, and wilt thou sleep on till the evening that will soon be upon thee ? The declining sun calls thee to awake.

2. What reason is there, that thy business in the world should shuffle out thy business for eternity ? Remember they had as good excuses as you, who upon the sending of them were rejected, and it was declared their day of grace was past, *Luke xiv. 18. 19. 20. 24.* Oh hast thou not a soul to provide for, thy eternal state to look after ? Can ye wonder, if, as ye prefer the world to Christ now, he give you your portion in this life ; and if ever the time come that thou set thyself to repent, he deny thee his grace, and bid thee go to the gods thou hast served ?

3. Consider the advantages thou hast now for seriousness, when the foam of youth has settled, and the infirmities of old age have not yet drawn on. O consider, and shew yourselves men. Ye have spent your youth in vanity, and will ye spend this age too that way ? What is it ye design for God, the dregs of thy years, that age that is the sink of infirmities ? and ye will part with sin, when ye can follow it no longer. O Sirs, what confidence can ye have, that God will accept that off your hand ? *Mal. i. 8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil ? offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person ? saith the Lord of hosts.*

4. Suppose ye should live till ye grow old, O how few are there that get grace to repent when they are old ? I shall not say, there are none such ; but truly though they be, they are very rare. Be not ye encouraged to delay, because some were called at the eleventh hour, *Matth. xx. 6.* ; for if ye mark the text, these were others than those that were standing there at the third, sixth, and ninth hour. We set no bounds to sovereignty ; but as for those that live under the gospel, and spend their best days in sin and estrangedness from religion, common observation tells us, that it is God's ordinary way to plague them with hardness of heart, when they grow old : *Job xx. 11. His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.* About three hundred years after Christ, there was one that had lived a Pagan till he was an old man ; when he told *Simplicianus* that he was a Christian, he would not believe him : but when the church saw that he was really so, there was great shouting and gladness, saying, *Caius*

Marius Victorius is become a Christian! They wondered to see a man when he was old born again.

5. *Lastly*, Will ye see the deceit of delays. When ye were young, did ye not put it off to this time? and now when that is come, ye are as unready as before. Delay no more then, lest ye sleep the sleep of death.

Thirdly, Old people, why do ye delay repentance; why is not your heart bowing to God's call, when ye are begun to bow to meet the grave? Ye that have always thought ye had time enough all your days, ye will think there is time enough yet. But when is your term-day for repentance? a death-bed, it is like. And when ye come there, ye will hope it will be but a sick-bed, and so drive off your work till the utmost point. But, O Sirs,

1. May not *the time past of your life suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh?* Must ye have yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep? Well, when ye have taken it over the belly of God's call to you all your days, what confidence can ye have to look for grace or mercy then? Sin, Satan, and the world shall have all your time, and ye will look to God, and seek his favour, when ye can do no more. O, are ye not afraid, that that be accomplished on you? *Prov. i. 24. &c. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, &c.* I trow if your conscience were awakened just now, ye should have enough ado to fasten your feet on a promise of mercy.

2. How do ye know, that ye will get a death-bed or sick-bed? What do ye know, but that in a moment ye may drop into eternity, as many have done? Mind him who used to say, three words would do his turn at death. Death does not always send messengers to warn us of its approach. Nay, see what our Lord says expressly, *Matth. xxiv. 48.—* 51. *If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming. And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not ware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

3. *Lastly*,

3. *Lastly*, And is dying such an easy business, that ye must be laying up other work, yea your main work, for a dying time? I should think, that dying itself, with the pains, throes, and sickness that ordinarily attend it, were enough of themselves. Surely, if we were rightly exercised in health, we would endeavour, that when we come to die, we should have nothing ado but to die. But I pray you remember, you may come to die roving, without the exercise of your reason. But though ye should have it to the last, I pray you consider, is the work of repentance such an easy work as to leave it till the time you can do nothing else? Will ye put off turning to God, till ye are not able to turn yourselves on a bed, but as ye are lifted? taking heaven by storm, till your strength be gone? crying to God, till ye are not able to speak two sentences at once? making ready for death, till it be come to your bed-side?

Use. ult. I exhort you all to delay repentance and salvation-work no longer.

Mot. 1. Consider ye do but mock God, and cheat yourselves by your delaying. For it is inconsistent with a sincere purpose to repent, and turn from sin, 1 *Pet.* iv. 1. 2. 3. For he that sincerely minds to turn from sin, will presently turn from it.

Mot. 2. Repentance is not in your power; it is God's gift, which he gives when he will, *Acts* v. 31. *God hath exalted Christ with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel.* The time of God's grace is limited; a time wherein he will be found, and when not: *Is.* lv. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.* Death certainly puts a period to it. But it seems to be clear, that men may outlive their day of grace: *Luke* xiv. 24. *I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.* Time was when *Esau* might have had the blessing, but then he despised it; but the time came when he could not have it: *Heb.* xii. 17. *Ye know how that afterward when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.* Strike in then with the occasion; for if wind and tide fail, there can be no setting to sea.

Mot. 3. Though we knew certainly, that our day of grace were far from the end; yet it is a most unworthy thing so to deal with God. Shall men abuse mercy and grace, because the Lord waiteth to be gracious? Will men

abuse the divine patience, because it suffers long? What a folly is it to stand off as long as we can from him, to whom we must needs submit ourselves at length?

Mot. 4. The time is short, the work great, and so is the opposition. Salvation-work is a great work; it is no easy thing to be a Christian: ye must lay your account with all the opposition the devil, the world, and the flesh can make you; ye have but an age that is as an hand-breadth, as nothing, to do it in.

Mot. 5. Your life is most uncertain. We are tenants at will, we have no tack for to-morrow, *Jam. iv. 13. 14.* fore-cited. We are agreed about the necessity of repentance; the only question is, When shall it be done? God says, *To-day*; and to-morrow is not yours, but God's. How then can ye destinate for this use the time that is not yours? "Return to God one day before thy death," say the *Jewish* doctors. Wisely said; return then to-day, for it may be ye shall die to-morrow.

Mot. 6. The longer ye delay, the work will be the harder. For sin becomes stronger, as the waters, the farther from the head, the greater they grow. And the arrow that going from the bow strays from the mark, how far wide will it be ere it come to the utmost point? It is observed, that Christ groined at the raising of *Lazarus* four days dead; but not so at the raising of the young man of *Nain*, or *Jairus's* daughter. *Jer. xiii. 23.* Can the *Ethiopian* change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Their number increaseth; the devil who comes alone at first, at length his name is *Legion*. The heart grows harder, the mind blinder, the will more perverse, the affections more carnal.

Mot. 7. A moment's delay may be an eternal loss, because thou knowest not any moment that may not be thy last.

Mot. ult. God commands you to repent presently, *Heb. iv. 7.* Therefore upon your peril it is, if ye delay any more.

Object. The thief on the cross repented at the last gasp.
Ans. His repentance was one of the miracles at Christ's death; and he glorified God more at his death, than ye could if ye had been a penitent all your days. But though there was one that none might despair, yet there was but one that none might presume. The other thief even died as he lived.

The extraordinary Case of the Thief on the
Cross no Argument for delaying REPENT-
ANCE.

Two SERMONS, preached at *Etterick*, in
June 1717.

LUKE xxiii. 42.

*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest
into thy kingdom.*

THE love that sinners bear to their lusts, and the con-
viction men generally have of the necessity of re-
pentance, each of them putting in for a share, do natively
produce a delay. And Satan and the corrupt heart join to
support the delaying temper, both by pretended reasons, and
abused examples: amongst which last none is more so than
this of the thief who repented on the cross.

My great design being to convince you, that this instance
can be no encouragement to delay repentance, I need not
here lay for a foundation the proof of this man's sincerity,
which the text and context put beyond all doubt; nor insist
on explaining this his prayer, full of faith and repentance,
which had a most gracious answer.

Every body knows the story; and they that know very
little of the Bible, will be found acquainted with this instance
of the penitent thief on the cross; and they abuse it to their
own ruin, drawing encouragement from it to put off re-
pentance till they come to a death-bed.

We need not much wonder, that this becomes a stum-
bling-stone to many, on which they are ruined. Hearing the
thief was converted near the last gasp, and having led a sin-
ful life, the thread was suddenly broken, and he died hap-
pily; his day was a dark day all over, till in the evening
the sun broke out with a bright though short glimpse, and
then set: That this, I say, is abused and turned to a stum-
bling-stone by impenitent sinners, is no great wonder, if ye
consider the following things.

1. As a vicious stomach corrupts the best of meat; so im-
penitent

penitent sinners abuse the best things to their own ruin : so that what raises up others taught of God, is an occasion of falling to them. The altar of God, and the whole law was so to the unbelieving Jews, *Rom. xi. 9.* Is not the very gospel, and the preachers thereof, a *savour of death* to some ? *2 Cor. ii. 16.* Nay Christ himself is a *stumbling-block* to them, *1 Pet. ii. 7. 8.*

2. There is a particular disposition in the hearts of impenitent sinners to abuse and wrest the scriptures. Hence Peter speaking of Paul's epistles, says, *In them are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction,* *2 Pet. iii. 16.* The scripture is a light, and a rule of divine authority ; and it may well be expected, that if sinners can persuade themselves of a shelter there for their sins, it will be the most effectual one. This is the most feasible means for stilling the clamours of an ill conscience, and cheating men into their own ruin.

3. Abused scripture is one of the chief pieces of Satan's armour, wherewith he maintains and promotes his kingdom among those that have the scriptures. Thus Satan said to Christ, *Matth. iv. 6. If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Hence unclean persons still their consciences with the example of David, swearers with that of Joseph by the life of Pharaoh, or Peter's, &c. Men that are mere moralists screen themselves with that, *Mic. vi. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* And others satisfy themselves with good meanings and desires, because of that, *Matth. v. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.* Others think, they may repent at any time, from that scripture, *Ezek. xviii. 27. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* And thus it becomes harder to convince men that have some notional knowledge of the Bible, than those that never knew it.

4. Reigning love to sin makes people very dextrous to find out shifts for to preserve their lusts ; as in Saul's speech to Samuel, *1 Sam. xv. 15. They have brought them from the Amalekites : for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the*

the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed. What people would fain have to be true, it is easy to persuade them of; and what they are loath to part with, it is not hard to invent shifts to hold it still. Were men willing to be the Lord's, they would be so presently; and they would be loath to delay one moment, lest they should never see another.

To come to this particular instance in the text, I must tell you, That though here is ground of hope for poor trembling sinners, that they may be brought to repentance, and be accepted of God; yet there is no ground here for crafty delaying sinners to put off repentance, in hopes to go through with it afterwards, especially in a dying hour.

I. There is ground of hope for trembling sinners. And we may learn from this instance these following lessons.

1. They may go long on, and far on in the way to hell, whom yet God may bring home to himself. Here is a man, a thief, whose course brought him to an ill end, to a violent death, and yet grace reaches him. See the following remarkable passage, 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* From this it appears, that some of the Corinthian converts had been formerly the vilest of wretches, and guilty of the most enormous lewdness and impiety; and yet became famous monuments of the triumphs of sovereign efficacious grace. What a length did *Manasseh* and *Paul* go; and yet what illustrious penitents did they afterwards become? The latter justly acquired the character of the greatest of saints, and the most eminent of all the apostles.

2. Grace sometimes catches them that in appearance, and to the eyes of the world, are farthest from it. It passeth by the most likely, and pitches on the most unlikely objects. While chief priests, scribes, and elders mock Christ, the thief on the cross is converted. The Lord loves to set up the trophies of his victory in the midst of the devil's kingdom. Hence is that promise, *Is. lv. 5. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew*

not thee, shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

3. Grace makes a vast difference betwixt those whom it finds none. Here are two thieves, both on the cross: grace touches the heart of the one, but passeth by the other; and makes the one a convert, while the other dies hardened. So true is Paul's observation, *Rom. ix. 16.* So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

4. Lastly, While there is life there is hope. Here is one converted when near the last gasp; while his last sand was running, grace overtakes him, opens the eyes that before were closed, wins the heart that had been all along hardened. But I stay not on these things. Only the use that is to be made of this, is,

1. Let those that seek God early be encouraged from this, that they shall find him: *Prov. viii. 17.* *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.* Was he so ready to receive a penitent soul coming in at the last hour, then surely he will be very ready to receive thee that comes in before that time. He rejected him not because he was long a coming; but received him because he came. Come then forward with assured hope of thy acceptance upon thy early return.

2. Let not those whose day is almost gone, before they have begun their work, despair. Who knows but that may be done in the evening, that was neglected the whole day before? A gale for heaven may blow, that may put life in an old sinner, and make his flesh fresher than that of a child. The door of the vineyard stands open for labourers to come in even at the eleventh hour. Sovereignty is not penned up to times and ways, but takes a latitude in both.

3. Lastly, Let us sow beside all waters, in the morning and in the evening. It depends on the working of free grace, which shall prosper. We are ready to be hopeless of success, where persons have long stood out against the Lord. But God's heavy hand on a man, and a view of eternity, may afford a season wherein the wild ass may be caught.

II. But there is no ground here for the crafty delaying sinner to put off repentance, especially till a dying hour. To set this matter in a true light, consider these following things.

1. It is a most rare example. There is not an instance like it in all the book of God, unless it be that of *Achan*,
Josi.

Josh. vii. 20. 21. Yet the Lord has left that case of *Achan's* much under a cloud; so that it is not positively determined as this is, though we may charitably hope the best in his case too. Now, here I would have you to consider,

1st, What less could there have been to have cleared a possibility of acceptance with God, for a sinner at the last, after he has spent all his days in sin? If we had not had this instance, what could have been said to shew such wretched mis-spenders of time, that ever any that was so long a-setting off in their journey to heaven did get in? And because this says, that none should despair; must it therefore import, that they may safely delay? The sun once stood still in the days of *Joshua*; which says it is possible such a thing may be: but will any man delay his work in hope of such an extraordinary cast again? And why will ye?

2^{dly}, As one swallow makes not spring, so neither can this one event make a general rule that you or I may trust to. The ordinary rule is, That as men live, so they die; a holy life, a happy end; a graceless careless life, an unhappy and miserable end. Because Providence may go off the ordinary road, and do that in a few minutes with some, that ordinarily costs many years to others; can you venture eternity on that, that he will do so with you? *Moses* fasted forty days and nights, *Exod.* xxxiv. 28.; yet who will venture on that in hopes of having his life preserved without food?

3^{dly}, Are there not eminent instances to the contrary, wherein men living in their sin have been struck down in a moment, getting no time to repent of them, but fiery wrath has put an end to their days? Consider the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Lev.* x. 1. 2. of whom it is thought they had erred through drink, *vers.* 9.; *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, *Num.* xvi. 31. &c.; *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Acts* v. who died instantly with a lye in their mouth. But why do I instance in particular persons? Did not millions die together in their sins, by the deluge that swept away the old world, the fire and brimstone that burned up *Sodom*, *Gomorrha*, *Admah*, and *Zemboim*? What multitudes were there there, who being warned put off to the day they never saw? And shall this one instance encourage you to delay, over the belly of the dreadful example of millions on the other hand?

4^{thly}, The most that this so rare an example can amount to, is a possibility. It is not to so much as a probability or likelihood. That is a probable event; which though it does

not always fall out, yet for the most part it does so; as that the husbandman shall get more than his seed again. But from what is said it appears, that for the most part it falls out otherwise, namely, that people even die as they live. So that it is probable, that if thou do not repent before, God will deny thee grace to repent at the last. How then can a man that has any belief of a God, a heaven, and a hell, venture his salvation on a mere possibility, while the probability lies the other way?

2. Though there were two thieves on the cross at that time, yet it was but one of them that got grace to repent. The one indeed was a true penitent; but the other died as he lived, hardened in his sin; nay perhaps worse; for he died blaspheming the Son of God, before whose tribunal he was to appear, vers. 39. Now, upon this I would make these rational reflections.

1st, Is it not possible that thou mayst die blaspheming, if thou do not repent now in time? Thou canst not deny the possibility of it, when there is such a plain instance of it in the case of one of these thieves. Thou thinkest it may be thou mayst die a penitent with the good thief; and I say, it may be thou mayst die blaspheming with the other. The one is even as certain, as to us, as the other. Thou livest impenitent all thy days; when thou comest to a death-bed, God may withhold his grace from thee which thou hast all along refused; he may let thee see thy case hopeless for ever, and thou mayst be filled with despair; and in that case it is more than possible that both tongue and heart may rise against God.

2^{dly}, It is at least an equal venture, that thou mayst die impenitent, as that thou mayst die a penitent. Thou hopest to repent at the last; why? because the thief on the cross repented. And I must say, that delaying repentance till then, thou runnest the risk of dying impenitent; for the other thief died so. And who has told thee, whether thy lot shall be with the one or with the other? Now, to repent presently, makes thy salvation certain; to delay it, does at best leave it to a venture. And consider with yourselves seriously, if salvation and damnation be such trifling things, as to be left to an uncertainty, you do not know how it may fall.

3^{dly}, It is inconsistent with common sense, to leave that thing to a venture, which may be made sure, where a hit or a miss is of the utmost concern. Suppose a rebel might
certainly

certainly have his life by a willing submission to his prince, should he chuse to stay till he were apprehended by the officers; he would act most unreasonably, and put his life in hazard where there is no need; as in the case of *Shimei*, 1 *Kings* ii. 42. A thousand times more unreasonable art thou in such delays of repentance, for now thou mayst make heaven sure: but if thou delay, thy soul is left to a dreadful venture; and if thou miss when it comes to the point, thou art ruined for ever.

4thly, Nay but the venture is very unequal; for it is far more likely that delaying thou mayst die impenitent, than that thou mayst die penitent. Few took part with the good thief amongst all the croud of spectators; the multitude went the other thief's way, mocking, *vers.* 35. And what casts the balance here in case of likelihood, is,

(1.) Common observation, that tells us, that most people even die as they live. Repentance is a flower rarely seen springing up from a death-bed. A melting of heart for sin, because of the dishonour done to God by it, is seldom seen in such as have lived a graceless, careless, presumptuous life; but that disposition even hangs about them to the end.

(2.) It is certain that few are saved, in comparison of them that are lost: *Matth.* vii. 14. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* As to what some say of the infants of all mankind; all that are saved must go by the strait gate, and still these are few. It is evident, that most men live impenitent; yet all must die; and therefore it follows, that few get grace to repent at their last, but most of those that live impenitent even die so too.

(3.) The sad threatenings denounced against sinners going on in their sin, with respect to their latter end: *Prov.* i. 24.—27. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.* *Ezek.* xxiv. 13. *In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.* Now, show me one promise in all the Bible, promising the grace of repentance to those that delay, for to balance this. It is true, the go-

spel-offer is general, and excludes none while in this world ; but O what a hazard is there, that these threatenings be accomplished to the denying the grace to lay hold on them then.

(4.) Corrupt nature sticks fast in thee ; and it will harden thee in the face of death as well as it does now, unless thou get grace from above. Now, that corruption has possession long continued already, thou art sure of it ; but thou hast no certainty for the grace of God to break it in thee, and work repentance in thy so long impenitent heart. And therefore I must conclude the venture to be very unequal.

(5.) Repentance is not to be wrought by the sinner's being brought to an extremity, as you may possibly imagine. Here was a man that was hanging on a cross, bleeding to death in great torment, having a present prospect of eternity before him, who could have no more pleasure in the world. But did that humble him ? No, no. His heart remains obdured to the last gasp. He is going into eternity ; yet he is adding sin to sin, and going out of the world as he lived in it, if not worse. We find from *Matth. xxvii. 44.* that after the chief priests, scribes, and elders had mocked and railed on Christ, it is added, that *the thieves also which were crucified with him* joined in the railing. Whence some think, that even the other too joined in this railing on Christ, till grace broke in upon him, and overcame his nature.

(6.) The most powerful and likely means of grace will not prevail, unless accompanied with a special operation of the Spirit. This blaspheming thief was near Christ himself, and might hear his words and groans. He had the example of his companion moving him to repent. Grace was at work working wonders upon his neighbour. He had a dying preacher to call him to repent. The sun's light was eclipsed, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the graves opened : yet for all these he died impenitent, and hard-hearted. Think on this, ye that deem it so easy to repent, if ye were come to your last.

(7.) They that delay repentance till a dying hour, readily find they have another thing to do then, than to repent ; as is evident from the case of the other thief on the cross, *vers. 39.* *And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* Death is the destruction of nature, and therefore nature wrestles against it, though there be no hope. This man was more concerned to get his body saved, than to get his

soul saved. And, alas! is not this the case of the most part at that time? They have so much ado with the disease, that they can hardly get a due concern for their souls, or a composed thought.

3. There is no evidence that this thief had before such means of grace as you have. Who can say, that ever he heard the gospel preached by Christ or any of his disciples? It is most likely he was a rake; that if he heard any thing of God, it was from the scribes and Pharisees at times; and may be, when he might have heard either them, or Christ and his disciples, he was about his thievish trade. Now,

1st, It is unreasonable to think, that it should fare at the last with those who have had means of grace all their days, and despised them, as it may do with those who never have such means till they come to die. One would think it no wonder at all, to see a man converted at his last, who gets the first notice of Christ and the way of salvation when on his death-bed. But what is that to thee, who hast all along been invited to repent, and come to Christ, but wouldn't not? The former is no wonder in comparison of the latter.

2^{ally}, This conversion of the thief doubtless was a perfect surprise to him, a thing he was not looking for. But thou art setting tryst with repentance at thy last hours. Can you believe, that ever this thief delayed repentance in hopes of what he met with, namely, to die on a cross with Christ, and then to feel the power of his grace? No body can believe it. What is his example then to thee? Is it rational for thee to expect that favour which one has sometimes been surprised with, and got when he was not looking for it?

4. This thief was converted, when by the hand of public justice he was to die. When he was made a public example to the world, and as a malefactor brought to an untimely end, for his crime, he got repentance at the gallows, not on a death-bed. He was cut off perhaps in the midst of his days; at least he died not by the course of nature, nor by any sickness, but was execute for his evil deeds. And it is observable, that the one other case which looks likest to this in the Bible, was of the same sort, namely, *Achan's*. Now,

1st, It is evident, that wicked men who are running on in such courses as will bring them to an untimely death, by the laws of the land, such as thieves, robbers, murderers,

&c.

Ec. have a fairer ground from this to delay repentance, till they come to the scaffold, than you have, who are looking for a deathbed, and delay repentance till you come there. For their case is nearer akin to this than yours. But are not they most foolish if they so do, even in your eyes? No doubt they are. And so are ye in the eyes of others, whose eyes God has opened.

2dly, If we compare the case of this thief put to death for his crimes, and of other malefactors so dying, with the case of men that have lived impenitently dying in their beds; though grace is alike free to both, yet, humanly speaking, there is more hope of the repentance of the former than of the latter. And this I say on these three grounds.

(1.) It is more easy to convince a malefactor upon the scaffold, of his crime, and the evil of it, and of those other sins that have been the inlets to it, than to convince another of his sin upon a deathbed, as common observation sheweth. Hence our Lord says, *that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before the self-righteous Pharisees*, Matth. xxi. 31. Many a time is sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, drunkenness, neglect of the means of grace, confessed and regretted on a scaffold, while there is not one word of them from a death-bed, in cases where there is perhaps as good ground for it. When the corruption of nature breaks out in some atrocious crime that brings a person to an untimely end, there is more access to convince them of it, than others who have the same plague in them, but it has not so appeared.

(2.) The view that the thief had of eternity upon the cross, and that other malefactors have in such a case, is more certain than what impenitent sinners generally have on a death-bed. The one see they must die without peradventure, the other have some hopes of life generally while they have breath. And so the terror of death must needs be more operative in the one than the other; forasmuch as there is such a difference in the certainty of the view of it.

(3.) If we except the time wherein both are actually grappling with death, the one with a violent death, the other with a natural one; the former have less hinderances from the body to prepare for death than the latter; forasmuch as the one is tossed with bodily sickness and indisposition, the other commonly is not.

5. The conversion of the thief on the cross was an extraordinary manifestation of our Lord's power, made for special

special reasons. And therefore though it shows what the Lord can do; it does not show what ordinarily he will do. Consider here, to evince this, that,

1st, It was done in such a juncture of time, as the like never was, and the like never will be again; namely, when the Lord of glory, the Saviour of the world, was actually hanging upon the cross, paying the ransom for the lost elect world: *Rom. vi. 9. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

2^{dly}, It was a wonder wrought in a time allotted in a particular manner beyond all times, for God's working of wonders. The time of the Lord's giving the law on mount Sinai, was a time of wonders; but not comparable to this. The leading wonder there was God's making his voice to be heard, and speaking forth a holy law; and it was attended with other wonders, namely, thunders, lightnings, a thick cloud upon the mount, smoke, and fire, and the sound of a terrible trumpet waxing louder and louder, *Exod. xix. 16. &c.* But the leading wonder on mount Calvary was yet greater, namely, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, hanging, groaning, dying on a cross: and therefore the attending wonders were proportionably greater. For,

(1.) The sun was under a dreadful eclipse, for the space of not a few minutes, but three hours, *Matth. xxvii. 45.* The eye of the visible world was struck blind at the sight.

(2.) The vail of the temple was, without hands, rent from the top to the bottom, *Matth. xxvii. 51.*; to shew that by this death an end was put to the ceremonial law, and the way unto the holiest of all made open.

(3.) The earth quaked at the dreadful fact of crucifying the Lord of glory, *Matth. xxvii. 51.*

(4.) The hard rocks rent, upbraiding the spectators and guilty multitude with the hardness of their hearts, *Matth. xxvii. 51.*

(5.) The graves were opened, and many of the dead saints arose, to shew that Christ by his death had overcome the power of death over his people, *Matth. xxvii. 52.*

(6.) The spectators of those strange things smote their breasts, being struck to the heart, *Luke xxiii. 48.*

(7.) lastly, The centurion and his soldiers were convinced, that he whom they had crucified was the Son of God, *Matth. xxvii. 54.*

Now, upon all these I would make these reflections.

[1.] Is it reasonable, because the thief was converted at the

the last hour, in a time that the like never was, nor will be, for thee to expect that it shall fare so with thee? Thou mayst as well throw thyself into a burning fiery furnace, and hope to come forth safe, because *Daniel* and his fellows were once so delivered. Were Christ to come again, and to be crucified a second time between two malefactors, and thou wert one of them to be crucified with him, it might be that thou mightst be converted at thy last hour. And yet thou couldst not be sure; for it might be thy lot to be the hardened one, as it was the other thief's. But since it is not so, how darest thou trust to such a late repentance?

[2.] Is it any wise strange, that amongst all these wonders of justice, power, and faithfulness, there was one wonder of mercy upon the thief on the cross? that the same power that was rending the rocks, did mercifully open the heart of one of those thieves to receive Christ and his grace? But how canst thou think, that the time of thy departure will be a time of such wonders? And if not, how canst thou deceive thyself into a delay of repentance, in expectation of receiving such a signal display of divine grace and mercy?

[3.] Was it not very becoming the divine wisdom, that when the divine glory of the Son of God was veiled upon the cross, a ray of it should break forth in the conversion of one of two that were hanging there with him? that when his judges, and the rulers and people had got him on the cross as a malefactor, he should have his glory owned by one of those crucified with him: But what is that to thee, in a day wherein it is long since Christ was set down at his Father's right hand, and his glory published through the world by the gospel?

[4.] Is it any thing strange, that when our Lord was triumphing over principalities and powers, he set up one trophy, one sign of his victory, in the field of battle? *Col. ii. 15.* Was it not very natural, that he who when he should be lifted up, was to draw all men after him, should actually in the very time draw one after him? But what encouragement can that be to thee to delay to the last, when that nick of time is over long ago? And now there are thousands of visible monuments of Christ's conquest by his death set up, so that thou wilt never be missed, though thou die as thou livest, impenitent.

6. *Lastly*, The penitent thief on the cross was not only sincere, but he glorified Christ more in his late repentance,

than thou art capable to do by thine, nay more than if thou hadst lived a penitent all thy days. For consider,

1st, When our Lord was in his lowest step of humiliation, he professed his faith of his divine nature, and his being King of the other world : *Lord*, (says he), *remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*. What wonderful faith was this, that while Christ was so low as hanging on a cross, he owns him King of heaven ; that dying, he was going to receive a Kingdom ; that he has all power there ; that he is full of mercy, compassion, and faithfulness ; so that the very remembrance of him would be sufficient to secure his eternal welfare ! Thou mayst believe and profess all this, but never at such a time. He is now the exalted Redeemer, who has ascended far above all heavens, and sits on the right hand of God. But what is that to the glorifying of him in his lowest humiliation ?

2^{dly}, When others had crucified him as a malefactor, and were mocking him, and railing on him, as one that deserved not common compassion, he was praying to him, as Lord of the other world. If thou shouldst now do so too ; yet remember how small a thing is that in comparison of what the good thief did in these circumstances.

3^{dly}, All this he did, and more, publicly before a multitude of spectators, which thou art not likely to have when thou comest to a death-bed. He justifies God before them all ; he condemns himself ; he does what he can to convince and convert his poor graceless companion, who possibly sinned with him as he did suffer ; he condemns those that crucified Christ, and gives his public testimony against them, as men that feared not God.

To conclude this matter : Repent ye timeously, and trust not to a late repentance. Let not this example of the thief on the cross, or any thing else, make you to delay. Many a call ye have had to return to the Lord ; but, alas ! to the most part they have been ineffectual. God is giving us a providential call to repentance, at this time ; he is saying to us, as he did to the church of *Ephesus*, *Rev. ii. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent*. God knows what our present trial may end in. But in that dark dispensation we may clearly see that God is a jealous God, and makes people's sins to find them out. Repentance would be the most feasible means to extricate

us out of our difficulties. If there were a spirit of prayer and mourning for the causes of the Lord's controversy with us, it would be a token for good. But, alas! the work of repentance for the most part is put off from time to time, till it be put off to a death-bed; and who can secure the trust to be kept there?

There are three things I would say of deathbed-repentance.

1. If it be got, it is the most unuseful repentance for God, and the most uncomfortable to one's self. Unuseful; for then men begin their work for God, when their time is ending; and so though they may be saved, yet God gets little honour from them. And uncomfortable to persons themselves; for being saved, they are saved so as by fire; they must go to heaven by the brink of hell; while they see their last sand running, and get their consciences awakened, eternity must once be to them a dreadful spectacle.

2. Deathbed-repentance is seldom sincere. The king of terrors may make a *Pharash* say, *I have sinned*. But what sincerity is in the most part of those things that begin on death-beds, may be learned from the case of many, who being past hopes of recovery from their sickness, either as to themselves or others, do yet recover, and turn just the old men and women they were before. When the best appearances of deathbed-repentance are, it is hard to make sure conclusions; but as *Augustine* said in such a case, *Non dico damnabitur, non dico salvabitur; sed tu, dum sanus es, pœnitentiam age* *.

3. Lastly, Many trust to deathbed-repentance that never see it. Some are surprised into eternity; some are tossed so with sickness that they cannot have a composed thought; some quickly lose the use of their senses and reason; and most part die as they live: Therefore repent ye in time, and delay no more, lest ye bring the ruin on your souls that will never be recovered.

* i. e. I don't say, that such a person shall be damned, or that he shall be saved; but do thou, whilst thou art in health, mind the business of repentance.

God's

God's Delay of executing the Sentence of Condemnation against ungodly Men, often miserably abused by them.

Several SERMONS preached at *Etterick*, in Summer 1728.

Ecc l. viii. 11.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

THis book of *Ecclesiastes* is in a particular manner a book of providence, wherein *Solomon* gives his observes upon it. It is a subject that has puzzled the best of men, how to reconcile it with the being and attributes of God: but there is no inconsistency; all odds will be made even at length.

He had observed some set on high to their ruin, made rulers of others to their own destruction, to the feeding of their own lusts, and so aggravating their own condemnation, vers. 9. He had observed them live prosperously in their wickedness, die in honour, and buried magnificently, vers. 10. He opens the secret of this dispensation in the text, namely, That a reprieve is no pardon. In the words we have,

1. God's patience with, and forbearance exercised towards ungodly sinners: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily.* (1.) It is supposed that sentence is passed in their case. There is a righteous sentence standing against an evil work, and the evil worker for what he has done: it is not overlooked, nor forgotten. *Heb. doing of the evil*; by which is meant an ungodly course. This is plain from 1 John iii. 8. 9. *He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he can-*

being guilty, if out of Christ, he is liable to vengeance, under the curse; if in Christ, he is liable to temporal strokes. So all ungodly ones, evil-workers, are liable to the curse for their sins.

2. The law is the accuser, that accuseth the sinner of rebellion against God, and demandeth vengeance on him, *John v. 45.* Every command broken by the sinner accuseth him before God; and as many breaches as he has made of it, as many articles there are of the libel against him. And though these be innumerable to men, and many of them unknown to them; they are not so unto an omniscient God.

3. God is the judge that judgeth and passeth the sentence against the guilty, *Psal. l. 6.* And he is a judge whom no artful concealment can beguile. He cannot be blinded, bribed, nor biased, *1 Pet. i. 17.* His sentence, however severe, is always righteous, *Rev. xvi. 7.* And there lies no appeal from his tribunal; for there is none above him, who is the Most High. Only, while the sinner is, in this world, there is access to a remission in Christ.

4. The sentence is a sentence of death, *Gen. ii. 17.*; death in its full latitude, comprehending all miseries of soul and body; eternal death, in which the gnawing worm never dies, nor is the fire quenched. The sentences of men are at most the death of the body: but his sentence adjudgeth the soul to die eternally. The reason is, the infinite dignity of the divine Majesty offended by sin.

5. The grounds of this heavy sentence, are the transgressions of God's holy law: *Gal. iii. 10.* *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* The holy law is a transcript of the purity of the divine nature; in it he hath set forth his own image. That image the sinner does what he can to deface, by violating the law: but God will magnify the law, and make it honourable, though in the destruction of the sinner.

The grounds of it more particularly are,

1st, The sin of nature, original sin imputed, *Rom. v. 12.*; and original sin inherent, that corrupt frame of soul that is natural to us, whereby we are prone to evil and averse to good, *Gen. vi. 5.* By reason of this we come into the world under the sentence of death. And as serpents and vipers are objects whose destruction men seek on the first sight of them, because of their poisonous nature; so it fares with men, the ve-

ry first sight of whom, in respect of their original sin, is loathsome unto a holy God, and thereby they become objects fit only for destruction.

2dly, The sins of the heart, *Psal.* xxiv. 4. *Matth.* v. 28. 29. Heart-sins are not liable to man's judgment: but how can they escape the judgment of God, to whose all-seeing eye our hearts are just as open as our lives? He sees the rottenness that is within the whited sepulchres, and passes his sentence against lusts of covetousness, uncleanness, malice, revenge, &c. burning within the heart, as well as against the same defiling the conversation.

3dly, The sins of the tongue, *Matth.* xii. 37. It is a channel by which the heart vents much of its inbred corruption, contempt of God, &c. *Jude* 15. in his mocking, maligning, and running down of seriousness, and agenting the cause of irreligion; and contempt of our neighbour, in railing, reproaching, obscenity, lying, &c.; which may shew why the rich man in hell is represented seeking water to cool his tongue.

4thly, The sins of the life, wicked actions, whether of impiety against God, unrighteousness against men, or intemperance against ourselves, *Jude* 15. None of all these will escape the judgment of God, however craftily they be managed, whatever fair colours be drawn over them: *Ecccl.* 12. ult. *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Sinners may forget them, and let them slip out of mind; but the Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, *Surely I will never forget any of their works,* *Amos* viii. 7.

5thly, Omissions of duty, *Matth.* xxv. 41. &c. Men will find sentence passed on them by a just God, not only for the ill they have done, but for the good they were obliged to have done, but did it not. The man that hid his talent, and improved it not for his Lord, is doomed to outer darkness, *Matth.* xxv. 24. 30.

6. This sentence against the ungodly is openly pronounced in the word: *Rom.* ii. 8. 9. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation, and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil.* God speaks from heaven to men, *Heb.* xii. 25.; not by a voice coming through the clouds, but by his voice in the written word, *2 Kings* xxii. 19. compared with *vers.* 11. The Bible is God's word to us, whereby he is speaking to us, and will speak to men unto the

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the end of the world, either absolution or condemnation according to their state.

7. It is registered there too : *Gen. ii. 17. In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Ezek. xviii. 4. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.* The scripture is the records of the court of heaven, where the ungodly may read their doom, and see the sentence standing against them. And that certainly is one of the causes of the neglect of the scriptures in our day ; for in it *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. Ahab hated Micajah, because he never spake good of him. The scripture never speaks good of a man that is wedded to his lusts, and has no will to part with his beloved liberty in the way of sin ; and therefore he hates or neglects it.*

8. It is secretly intimate by the conscience sometimes, *1 John iii. 20. Conscience is God's deputy within the man ; and when his corruption drives him full to do an ill work, and when he has done it, to defend it ; conscience will be condemning it, and him too, from the holy law, Rom. ii. 15. And when it is thoroughly awakened, it will so pronounce the sentence against the man, as will fill him with the greatest of terror.*

9. It will be openly pronounced before all the world at the last day : *Matth. xxv. 41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Where it is observable, that they are declared cursed and condemned ones, before that solemn publishing of the sentence against them. For none will be condemned then, but such as are in this world before that in this life condemned already.

10. *lastly,* Howbeit, the time of the execution of the sentence, in particular, is not now intimate to the sinner. The Lord keeps that a secret, that sinners may not adventure to live a moment in the state of condemnation ; but not knowing but it may be execute next moment, they may not put off a moment the suing for a remission.

USE 1. Of Information. Hence learn,

1. The state of every ungodly person, worker of iniquity, and all unbelievers, is a miserable state, a state of condemnation. They are as really under a sentence of death, as ever any malefactor was : *John iii. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already ; because he hath not believed in the*

name

name of the only begotten Son of God. Think on this, ye young and old ungodly ones: though the sentence is not execute against you, it is passed on you; look into your Bible, and see it.

2. As silent as God sits in heaven, while sinners on earth are neglecting and affronting him, he is no idle spectator of their way and manner of life: *Psal. l. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.* He has sentenced them, and sees their day is coming, *Psal. xxxvii. 13.* They have their sinning day, and God sees their day of count and reckoning is coming on, wherein every item shall be distinctly charged on them: *Eccl. xi. 9. Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* They laugh at the evil day, because they do not see it come; God laughs at them, because he sees it coming; and his will be when theirs is done, *Prov. i. 26. when he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh.*

3. It is not strange, that the world is filled with the noise of mens lusts and ungodly lives. If ye were gone into a prison filled with condemned men, ye would think it melancholy indeed, but not strange to hear the iron chains rattling in every part of the room. This world is such a place, crowded with condemned people; unmortified lusts are the chains on them: and that is the reason of the grating noise which the serious godly hear from every corner. And the jailor, the devil, is going among them.

4. lastly, No wonder that most men love this life, so as to loath exchanging it for another; *Psal. lv. 23. But God shall bring them down into the pit of destruction.* The prison is a heavy place to the condemned man; but to go out of it is more so, for that is to go to execution, *Jer. xvii. 11.* Death brings the execution of the sentence.

USE 2. of Trial. Try whether that sentence is standing against you, or whether it is reversed, and ye justified.

To move you to put this to the question, consider,

1. One thing is sure, that once it was passed and standing against you: *Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others, Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Compared with *Rom. iii. 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all*

the world may become guilty before God. Now, what course have ye taken to get this sentence taken of? and if you have been aiming at it, have ye carried it?

2. As your state is in this life, condemned or justified, so it will be determined at death and judgment: *Eccl. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.* Now, there is access for a remission; but when death comes, there will be no more for ever.

3. Men are apt to mistake in this point. Many draw an absolution from the sentence for themselves, which God will never set his seal to: *Luke xvi. 15. Christ said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God. If. xlv. 20. He feedeth of ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* The foolish virgins called themselves the Bridegroom's friends; but he shut the door on them as his enemies.

4. *lastly*, A mistake here is very fatal. By it men let the time of obtaining a remission slip. The oil might have been got for the lamps, if they had missed it timely. It brings a ruining surprise: dreaming of peace, they are awaked with the noise of war for ever.

Mark 1. They that never saw themselves in a state of condemnation, are under it to this day. For they are strangers to the very first work of the Spirit, conviction, *John xvi. 8. The law is our school-master, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith, Gal. iii. 24.* They that have never been at the law's school, to learn that they are cursed and condemned sinners by nature, are not Christ's disciples.

Mark 2. They only are absolved, who laying hold on Christ in the covenant of grace have pled to the law's sentence of condemnation against them, the righteousness of Christ wrought by him, and offered to and accepted by them. Hence says the Apostle, *Phil. iii. 7. 8. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:—and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.* They continue not in mere suspense, but renouncing self-confidence, law-confidence, and creature confidence, have betaken themselves to him

as their only refuge, casting anchor on the promise of the gospel.

Mark 3. If the condemning power of sin is removed, the reigning power of sin is removed too, and contrariwise: *Rom. vi. 14.* For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. If the condemned man has got his remission, he is taken out of his irons, and his prison, and the power of the jailor. The chains of reigning lusts rattling about thee, declare thee a condemned man still; but it is otherwise with the pardoned, *Rom. viii. 1. 2.* There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. If ye are justified, ye are washed, *1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. 11.*

Mark 4. If the sentence be reversed, ye will be habitually tender in your conscience with respect to temptations, sin and duty, and appearances of evil. Hence Paul could say, *Acts xxiv. 16.* Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. The man who under the sentence of death, has obtained a remission, will readily fear falling into the snare again. Hence we find this was Hezekiah's exercise, *Is. xxxviii. 17.* Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. *Vers. 15.* What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. Absolved persons may be guilty of acts of untenderness; but habitual untenderness is a black mark of condemnation.

Mark ult. The fruits of faith in a holy life follow the reversing of the sentence. We are justified by faith without works; but the faith that justifies, produces good works. Hence we read, *Acts xv. 9.* of purifying the heart by faith. If the curse is removed, the fruits of the Spirit will spring up in the soul, *Gal. v. 22. 23.* love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. The Apostle James shews that faith not to be true, that is not attended with the fruits of holiness.

Now, if the sentence once standing against you is reversed, then,

1. Love the Lord, who freely gave you your remission, instead of leading you forth to execution; as did the woman

of whom our Lord says, *Luke vii. 47. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.* Remember the day when ye stood self-condemned and law-condemned before the Lord, and he said, *Job xxxiii. 24. Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.*

2. Pity and be concerned for those that are as yet under the condemnation which ye are freed from, *Tit. iii. 2. 3.* Where people's contempt and disdain have the heels of their pity, compassion, and concern for the welfare and recovery of sinners, it is a sad sign; speaking forth more of pride and presumption, than of themselves being in a state of remission.

3. Walk humbly and tenderly. The remembrance of the sentence of death sometime lying on you, may humble you while ye live. It sets us ill to be proud and conceity, who owe our life to a remission. Stand aloof from the deadly snare; a pardoning God has said, *Go, and sin no more,* *John viii. 11.*

4. Bear your troubles and trials in a world patiently. Your life was forfeited, and that is safe by grace. Why does a living man complain? This is a day wherein the Lord seems to be rising up to plead against the generation, bringing on common calamity. Take thankfully what falls to your share of it, in consideration that the sentence against your soul is reversed. If the seed should rot under the clod, and the beasts of the field perish under the stroke; kiss the rod, and be thankful, that the execution is not upon yourselves.

5. Lastly, Be of a forgiving disposition: *Eph. iv. 32. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* The Saviour that brought in remission of sins, binds us to love our enemies; and the bitter revengeful spirit against others speak us unforgiven, *Matth. vi. 15. If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

But if ye are of those against whom the sentence still stands in the court of heaven, lay the matter to heart, and consider it as a most heavy case, as it is indeed, deserving tears of blood. And so I proceed to

USE 3. of Lamentation. We may here lament over the case of every ungodly one, and natural man. The state of one under sentence of death, is a lamentable case. O ungodly sinner, however easy thou art, God's law has condemned thee, and thou art under the sentence of eternal death, *John iii. 36. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see*

see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. See thy heavy case in this glass.

1. You are forfeited of your covenant-right to the creatures, as a condemned person. Whether thou hast little or much in the world, it is a sorry right you have to it; a mere providential right, such as a condemned man to his meat, till the day of execution come. Therefore a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked, *Psal. xxxiv. 16.* There is little satisfaction in that.

2. God is your enemy, befriend you who will, *John iii. 36.* forecited. He bears a legal enmity against thee, as a just judge against a condemned man. Ye can have no communion with him: *Amos iii. 3.* Can two walk together, except they be agreed? All comfortable intercourse betwixt God and thy soul, is drowned in the gulf of thy state of condemnation. There can be no peace between God and you. To allude to the conference between *Joram* and *Jehu*, *2 Kings ix. 22.* And it came to pass when *Joram* saw *Jehu*, that he said, Is it peace, *Jehu*? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother *Jezebel*, and her witchcrafts are so many? how can they have peace with God, whom his law condemns? What peace ye have in your consciences, God allows not, *Jf. lvii. 21.*

3. Nothing you do can be acceptable to God; there is a lasting cloud over your heads that never clears: *Psal. vii. 11.* God is angry with the wicked every day. While the condemning curse of the law lies on a man, it blasts all the good he does: *Tit. i. 15.* Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. *Hag. ii. 12. 14.* If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then answered *Haggai*, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean. It mars sanctifying influences, without which there can be no fruit, *John xv. 5.* for without me ye can do nothing. Hence all ye do is turned to sin.

4. The sentence against you is confirmed daily. The truth of God confirms it: *Num. xxiii. 19.* God is not a man, that he should lye, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? And the cords of thy guilt are growing stronger and stronger; for the grounds of
condemnation

condemnation against thee are multiplying; while none of the old debt is removed, but new is still contracted. And though one may think, that it is but dying for all; yet the punishment will be increased, as evil works are; for men will be rewarded according to their deeds.

5. Justice craves execution against thee. There was a cry to heaven against *Cain*, and against *Sodom*: and so there is against every ungodly sinner, *Jer. ix. 9. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Mercy may suspend execution a while against the ungodly; but if they continue in that state, it cannot reverse it; since God cannot cease to be just.

6. All is ready for the execution. The bow is bent to let fly the arrows of wrath against thee, the arrows of death, *Psal. vii. 12. 13. The pile of fire is set on, Is. xxx. 33. For Tophet is ordained of old: yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.* When thou liest down, thou hast no security, that it shall not be execute ere thou arise, &c.

7. Lastly, Thy life depends, as to thee, only on God's long-wasted patience and long-suffering, procuring thy reprieve from day to day, if so thou wilt sue out thy pardon. As secure as thou art, the sword of justice hangs over thy head, by the worn hair of long-tired patience; which if once broken, thou art gone for ever.

USE ult. of *Exhortation*. Wherefore bestir yourselves to get out of the state of condemnation, to get the sentence reversed.

Motive 1. It is a sad and miserable life to live in the state of condemnation. For in effect such a life is a continued death. (1.) It is a dishonourable life. Condemnation fixes a blot and stain on man, speaks him guilty of crimes for which he is not worthy to live. And surely the judgment of God is according to truth. (2.) It is an uncomfortable life: *Is. lvii. 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.* There is enough in it to squeeze the sap out of all created comforts; and for the consolations of God, they can have none of them, *Amos iii. 3. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* The joy and comfort of a natural man is but like that of a madman; and so when he comes to himself, all is swallowed up in that, he is a condemned man. This the prodigal found, *Luke xv. 17. And when he came*

came to himself, he said, *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* (3.) It is an unsafe life: *John iii. 36. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Amidst all thy mirth and jollity, the sword of justice is hanging over thy head by a hair, and every moment, for all that thou knowest, it may fall, and cleave thee asunder. This our Lord threatens in the parable of the wicked servant, *Matth. xxiv. 50. 51. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not ware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Mot. 2. The reversing of the sentence by a remission, is not so easily obtained as men are apt to imagine. Many think there is no more ado, but after a careless graceless life, when they come to die, to commend their souls to God, with a *God have mercy on me*; and all will be safe. But they that get out a remission, get it so as they are taught other thoughts of it. Hence is that exclamation of the church, *Mic. vii. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* Consider,

1st, Sin is the greatest of evils, the deepest of all stains to wash out. Fair words, nay tears, nay not the blood of bulls and goats, not the blood of one's own body, will wash it out; only the blood of the Son of God: *Heb. ix. 22. Without shedding of blood is no remission.* Compared with *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Sin is the most contrary to God's nature: *Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* And therefore it is the object of his greatest loathing. Going on in sin, thou art engaged against all the attributes of God. Sin has marred the whole frame of God's workmanship, provoking him to break it in pieces. Can it be easy to get all this buried in forgetfulness with a jealous God?

2^{dly}, God's giving of remissions, is one of his greatest works. Hence is that prayer of *Moses, Num. xiv. 17. 19. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt,*
even

even until now. This is a work greater than the making of a world. That was done by a word spoken. But in this case, justice stands up for satisfaction, truth for the honour of a broken law, and wisdom finds a way for mercy only by the blood of Christ: *John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

3dly, Sad breakings of heart do sinners ordinarily endure, ere they being once touched with sense of sin, get the pardon of it. This was the case of Peter's hearers, *Acts ii. 37. They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Paul can tell you from his experience of the terror of the Lord; David, of broken bones. However lightly ye think now of the way of coming at it; a medicine given you for sweating out the poison of sin, will readily make you sick at heart, and perhaps bring you to the last gasp, *Is. xxxiii. 24.**

Mot. 3. Howbeit, God is now on a throne of grace to grant remissions: *2 Cor. v. 19. God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Ye may get a pardon now in the Lord's own way: *Is. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Heaven's white flag of peace yet hangs out, the market of free grace stands open, an indemnity is proclaimed in the gospel: *Acts xiii. 38. Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.**

Mot. 4. Lastly, Accels to remissions will not last: *Is. lv. 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Abused patience will break out into fury: *Luke xiii. 24. 25. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Beware ye sit not your day of grace, and delay not till ye will find no place for repentance: *Luke xiv. 24. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.***

Object. My sins are great. Ans. Neither the greatness, multitude,

multitude, nor backsliding into them will hinder: *Is. i. 18.* Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll. *Is. lv. 7.* Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. *Jer. iii. 22.* Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. The Lord has set up instances of pardoning mercy, that none may despair; as *Adam, Manasseh, Paul,* and the *Jews* crucifiers of Christ.

Direct. 1. Be sensible of your sin; of the evil of it; of the mischief done to yourselves, and the injury and dishonour done to God. Look to the law, the justice of God, &c.

Dir. 2. Go to God, and confess your sins fully and freely: and condemn yourselves, acknowledging yourselves justly condemned by the law, and God to be righteous if he should execute the sentence.

Dir. ult. Look to Jesus Christ the propitiation held forth to you in the gospel, his unspotted righteousness offered to you, and the covert of his blood, the retiring place for safety to guilty creatures. Believe the gospel, that these are made over to you therein, and take possession thereof, by trusting wholly thereon for your remission, and the sanctification of your nature; *John iii. 16.* God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. So shall ye be united to Christ by faith.

Take that advice, which the servants of *Benhadad* offered to their master, *1 Kings xx. 31.* Put on the sackcloth of deep humiliation, ropes about your necks, acknowledging you are worthy of death, and go forth to Christ by faith; for the King of *Zion* is a merciful king, and will save your life.

Doct. II. The Lord oftentimes does not soon come to the execution of the sentence against ungodly men, evil-workers; but delays it for a time.

In prosecuting this doctrine, we shall,

I. Take a view of the method of Providence in this matter.

VOL. III.

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II. Account

II. Account for this slow method of Providence.

III. Make application of the subject.

I. We shall take a view of the *method of Providence in this matter*. There is a twofold method of Providence with the ungodly, evil-workers, in respect of execution against them; namely, a swift and a slow method.

FIRST, There is a *swift* method the Lord sometimes takes with sinners: *Mal. iii. 5. I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, &c.* Sinners adventure on evil works; and God sentences them for them presently, and pursues them hard with execution, without delay. (1.) Sometimes the sinner has an ill work in design, and the Lord counts his will for the deed, and prevents by a speedy execution; as in *Haman's case*. He hatched the mischief, but he did not see it come forth. (2.) Sometimes the sinner is in actual motion to the ill work, and execution is done on him ere he get it performed. So it fared with the rebellious *Israelites*, in their attempting to go into the promised land, *Num. xiv. 44. 45.* And so it fared with *Jeroboam*, putting forth his hand to lay hold on the prophet, *1 Kings xiii. 4.*; and with *Uzziah* having the censer in his hand, *2 Chron. xxvi. 19.* (3.) Sometimes the execution tryeth with the very doing of the ill work, so that the sinner is taken away with the stroke in his sin. Thus fared it with *Nadab and Abihu* offering strange fire, *Lev. x. 1. 2.*; with *Zimri and Cozbi* cut off in the act of uncleanness, *Num. xxv. 8.*; and with *Herod*, who was eaten up of worms for his Atheism and blasphemy, *Acts xii. 23.* (4.) Sometimes as the ill work is done out and ended, the execution begins. So it fared with *Sennacherib's* blasphemous letter. He had writ it, and it was read; so his sin was completed; and that very night the Lord smote his army, and soon after himself, *2 Kings xix. 14. 35. &c.* (5.) Sometimes the execution keeps pace with the ill work, and the one goes on as the other does; judgment in the several degrees following hard at the heels of the sin. So it fared with *Hiel*, in his building of *Jericho*, *1 Kings xvi. ult.* (6.) Sometimes execution begins with the sinner's beginning to reap the fruit of his sin: when he leans upon his wall, a serpent bites him. So it fared with *Ahab* taking possession of *Naboth's* vineyard, *1 Kings xxi. 18. 19.* And so it fared with the lusters in the wilderness, *Psal. lxxviii. 30. 31.* (7.) Lastly, Sometimes when one's sin begins to work,

work, in its bitter fruits and effects on others, it recoils on the sinner himself. So it fared with Judas the traitor, *Matth. xxvii. 3. 4. 5.* It is a sport to some to do mischief to others; but ere all be done, it may, in the just judgment of God, come as heavy on themselves as on their neighbour.

SECONDLY, There is a *slow* method the Lord takes oftentimes with sinners, *Neb. ix. 17.* They commit their evil works; the sentence is presently passed for them: but then the execution is delayed, *Psal. l. 21.* And that is what is particularly noticed in our text. Concerning this method I offer these observes.

1. The sinner may get his evil work contrived and accomplished, without any let in his way from Heaven, by any execution against him. There is a God in heaven who has his eye upon him all along; but that God keeps silence, and lets the sinner take his swing, *Psal. l. 21.* He could cut him off from the purposes of his heart, and break his arm, that he should not accomplish his work: but he does it not.

2. The ill work being done without let, the sinner may also for a time pass unpunished, and as little notice may seem to be taken of it, as if there were not a God to judge upon the earth, *Ezek. ix. 9.* There are times wherein holy Providence, as it were, winks at ungodly sinners, *Acts xvii. 30.* Hence God is said to *awake to judgment*, when that time is over, *Psal. vii. 6.*

3. Yea, ill works may not only for a time escape unpunished, but undiscovered too, *Hos. xii. 7. 8. Prov. xxx. 20.* There are many abominations that appear with open face in the world; but there are perhaps more that are not discovered, being reserved to the judgment of the great day, *1 Tim. v. 24. Rom. ii. 16.* An omniscient God could pull the vail off them, but in the slow method it is long a-doing.

4. Sinners finding it go thus, encourage themselves in evil, repeat their evil works, add sin to sin, and give themselves the loose in their sinful courses. This is observed in our text. None go to the highest pitch of wickedness all of a sudden, but by degrees*. Ill works at first have a terror about them, and the sinner trembles under some fearful expectation at first: but a long-suffering God strikes not, thence the sinner gathers courage, *Psal. lxiv. 5.* and ventures again, and the terror wears off by degrees.

* *Nemo repente sit turpissimus.*

5. Nay sinners may prosper in an ill course. So far may they be from execution done against them, that they may thrive in the world in it: *Psal. xxxvii. 35. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree.* The sun of worldly prosperity may shine light and warm on men in a course of sin, gone away from God, and God from them. Yea, objects of God's indignation may in that respect be treated as if they were the darlings of Heaven; and the objects of God's special love, as if they were the buts of his wrath: *Eccl. viii. 14. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth, that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, these be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.* This has been sometimes puzzling to the saints, as to *Jeremiah*. See chap. xii. 1. 2.

6. More than that, they may prosper by their ill works, they may enjoy the fruits of their sin, and thrive by their ill courses; as *Ephraim* did, *Hos. xii. 7. 8.* Riches are called the mammon of unrighteousness, because oft-times they are got together by unrighteousness. Many a fair estate, and great worldly wealth has been got together by oppression; yea the foundation of some has been laid in blood, *Hab. ii. 12.* A plain evidence, that men may not only prosper in, but by sin.

7. Sinners may get a long time of it, wherein they sin, and God spares still. The old world got a long day of 120 years. *Job* observes, that the wicked may live, and become old, and continue prosperous too, *Job xxi. 7.* and *Is. lxxv. 20.* Sometimes God quickly cuts off men in a course of sin: but it is not always so; but men may grow grayheaded in the way of wickedness.

8. The Lord may seem to be in his way to execute the sentence sometimes, and yet may give another delay; his hand stretched out, he may withdraw again, *Psal. lxxviii. 38.* Criminals may be set on the brow of the hill, and yet be returned safe, and make a very ill use of the deliverance, turning worse on the back of it. The 120 years being out, the old world got seven days more respite, and they gave themselves the loose. See *Matth. xxiv. 38.*

9. When execution is at length begun, it may be carried on very leisurely for a time: the drops may come very few and soft before the shower, *Is. ix. 1.* God may deal very gently with impenitent sinners, even when he is risen up against them, before he come to the full execution. God's judgments

judgments coming with iron hands, may yet proceed with leaden feet in slow pace.

I. *Lastly*, More than all that, the execution may be entirely put off during this life. Men may live wickedly and prosperously, die peaceably, and be buried honourably; and so would wholly escape with their ill works, were it not that there is another world and an after-reckoning, and that there is no delay of execution there. This is plain from *Eccl. viii. 10. I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done.* *Luke xvi. 19. 22. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. The rich man also died, and was buried.* *Psal. lxxiii. 4. There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.* Sometimes God makes the world witness to the execution of the sentence against an ill work: but oft-times men get out of the world without it, in this slow method of providence.

II. We shall account for this slow method of Providence. And there is much need to do it, because there is a mystery of providence in it that is not easy to unriddle, and among men there are sad blunders about it. And,

1. It is wrested by many a sinner in his own case, to his own ruin, *Prov. i. 32.* We naturally have such high thoughts of the world's smiles, that we are apt to imagine God thinks highly of them too, and that he expresses his special love and kindness by them. But quite the contrary: *Rev. iii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* Hence a prosperous sinner can hardly imagine himself not to be a favourite of Heaven, at least cannot think God is so angry with his way as some would give out; and so he continues secure in his course, *Psal. i. 21.*

2. Being misunderstood, it is ruining to many spectators, and is in hazard of turning them atheistical, and contempters of religion: *Mal. iii. 14. 15. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* There are many who have no inward principle of religion. Now, when these see that there is worldly advantage to be got by it, they embrace it, like the mixed multitude from *Egypt*: but when they see the way
of

of wickedness prosperous, and sinners to keep the road for all the threatenings against them, and the godly afflicted and bowed down for all the promises to them; they are ready to think, that the threatenings and promises of the word are both but empty sounds, and that they see so.

3. There is a difficulty in it, that has puzzled many a great saint, and made him to stagger. So ready are we to walk by sense, not by faith. This was a knotty piece of the book of providence to *Jeremiah*, though he resolved to believe over the belly of sense, *Jer. xii. 1. 2.*; and to *Habakkuk*, chap. i. 2. 3. 4. It had almost carried *Isaiah* quite off his feet, *Psal. lxxiii. 2.* — 13. 14.

4. There being a darkness on the minds of all men with respect to the methods of divine procedure, they are apt to imagine an inconsistency of this method of providence with the perfections attributed to God. And there are four divine perfections, that are apt to run a risk with poor sinners blind and rash in judging.

1st, His omniscience, whereby he seeth and noticeth all things done in the world, *Prov. xv. 3. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* But when men themselves are conscious of their own wickedness, and yet see that God does not proceed against them for it, they are apt to say, as *Ezek. ix. 9. The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.* So the Psalmist represents men going on in their wickedness, secure as to any notice to be taken of it from heaven, *Psal. xciv. 5. 6. 7. They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see: neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* Therefore *Job* asserts it on that occasion, chap. xxiv. 1. *Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him, not see his days?*

2^{dly}, His holiness, whereby he is pure in himself, and cannot but hate all impurity and sin in his creatures. It is certain that it is so. The angels proclaim it, *Is. vi. 3. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.* The Psalmist pointedly declares it, *Psal. v. 4. 5. Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.* But when men see this method of providence with ungodly sinners, they can hardly believe it, *Psal. l. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee,*

thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. For, think they, if it were so, how could he bear with such unholiness in sinners affronting him, and trampling on his laws? Therefore the Prophet asserts it on that very occasion, but withal owns a difficulty of reconciling this method of providence with it, *Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*

3dly, His justice or righteousness, whereby he so hates sin that he cannot but punish it. It is certain it is so, *Gen. xviii. 25. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* He has demonstrated it in the death of his own Son. But when men see ungodly sinners going on in their sin unpunished, they are apt to think, that God is not so very just in that matter, as some give him out to be; for they cannot see sin get a just recompense. Therefore *Jeremiah* asserts it on that occasion, *Jer. xii. 1. Righteous art thou, O Lord.*

4thly, His goodness to his own people, whereby being good in himself, he does good to them that are good. It is certain it is so, *Psal. xxxiv. 8. 9. 10. O taste, and see, that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.* The Prophet got it in commission, *Is. iii. 10. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.* But when men see this method of providence dandling ungodly sinners, and smiting the godly, they are apt to think it is not so. And therefore *Asaph* asserts it on that occasion, *Psal. lxxiii. 1. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*

Now, to remove these misconstructions, and account for the slow method of providence, I offer these considerations.

First, This method is taken to bring sinners to repentance, and prevent their ruin, *2 Pet. iii. 9.*; and it is becoming the perfections of a merciful God, therefore to use it. By this means sinners,

1. Have time and space to repent given them, *Rev. ii. 21.* Were they always taken away just in the heat of their unmortified lusts, we would be ready to cry out of severity, *Num. xvii. 12.* But God gives them leave to cool ordinarily, if so they will bethink themselves, and turn to the Lord, and so prevent their own ruin.

2. They

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2. They are invited to repentance, and drawn towards it with the softest methods, *Rom. ii. 4.* Every sparing, preventing, bounteous mercy the impenitent meets with, calls aloud to him to repent. It says to him, *Do thyself no harm: it upbraids him with wilfulness for his own ruin, Why wilt ye die? with ingratitude, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? And so hereby,*

1st, God has the glory of some perfections, which otherwise would not shine forth so illustriously,

(1.) He has the glory of his long-suffering and patience: *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Grave observers of the slow method of providence must cry out, O wonderful long-suffering of a God! The patience of the meekest man on earth, would be quite worn out with less than the half of what a God bears with.

(2.) He has the glory of his universal good-will to poor sinners of mankind, *2 Pet. iii. 9. forecited. 1 Tim. ii. 4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* Justice is his act, his strange act; but mercy is what he has a peculiar delight in. He is slow to anger, but ready to forgive. This is written in very legible characters in this method.

(3.) He has the glory of his overcoming goodness. To do evil for good, is devilish; to do good for good, is human: but to do good for ill, is divine. Here shines forth the glory of the divine goodness, overcoming evil with good, *Luke vi. 35.* This is goodness becoming a God!

2^{dly}, As to the sinner, it issues always in one of two.

(1.) His recovery, to the saving of his soul from sin, and perishing eternally. And God, who has a due value for immortal souls, sees that a great thing; and treats it as worth the waiting on, *Luke xv. 7.* The scripture holds out this as a noble attainment, *Jam. v. 20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* How many are there singing Hallelujah's in heaven this day, by means of the slow method, that by the swift method had been roaring with the damned? "Had I died before threescore and sixteen, I had perished, for I knew not Christ." *Turk. hist. pag. 96.*

(2.) Or else his being left inexcusable, *Rom. i. 20.* The longer God has borne with, and the more kind he has been to impenitent sinners, the more inexcusable they will be;

and

and the more will God's severity against them be justified. And so this method tends to the clearing of God's justice.

Secondly, In the slow method God takes with sinners, he often has an eye to posterity; and that,

1. To posterity in general. And it is of use to them, whether the sinner so spared repent or not. If he repent, it is of noble use to encourage them that come after, to turn to God. How useful to many one has been the slow method which God took with *Manasseh* and *Paul*! *1 Tim.* i. 16. If he repent not, and vengeance seize him at length in sight of the world, he becomes a warning-piece to others that come after, *Psal.* xxxvii. 35.—37. Though it do not, his memory rots; and the conscience of every one that notices his wickedness silent and at an end in the grave, judges him to have spent his life foolishly, *Job* xxiv. 19. 20. Thus many who are of no use in the world to others but for mischief, God in his providence makes good use of them.

2. To the sinners own posterity; and that,

1st, To their posterity yet unborn. There may be vessels of mercy in the loins of vessels of wrath. Many graceless parents have been fathers and mothers of gracious children. It is for the elects sake that the world is kept up; and if the last elect were born and brought in, the world will quickly be at an end. The law spares a condemned woman, if she is with child, till she has brought it forth: and God often spares long, condemned sinners, for the elect that may be in their loins, *Matth.* xxiv. 22. There was a sentence passed against the generation which came out of *Egypt*, which for this very reason was about thirty-eight years ere it was execute on some.

2^{dly}, To their posterity already born; and that two ways.

(1.) As Satan gives some a surfeit of religion and sobriety in their parents; so God makes reprisals on him, by giving others a horror of sin and wickedness in theirs, *Ezek.* xviii. 14. And God spares them, that they may be a glass wherein their posterity may have a view of the hatefulness of sin. A wretched office, but it justifies the slow method of a holy God.

(2.) Men are often punished in their posterity. Many a poor child has smarted upon the occasion of the parent, and many a fair and flourishing family has wickedness rased. A holy just God sometimes pursues quarrels against some evil-workers through several generations, as is threatened in the

second command. The third and fourth generation are mentioned, because men may live to see themselves punished in their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. And they may be spared in this slow method for that very end. Witness *Zedekiah*.

Thirdly, In the slow method God takes with sinners, he has an eye to his own people : 2 *Cor.* iv. 15. *For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God.* As the world is kept up for the sake of God's people, so it is guided as it is by providence for their sakes. And it is their good that is designed by it : *Rom.* viii. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* The way that it comes to be for their good, is by means of the sharp trial they have by it. So God takes the slow method with ungodly sinners for the trial of his own children. And it is a sharp trial to them two ways.

1. They smart sore under their wickedness. Ungodly men are God's rod, as the *Assyriun* was God's hand against his people, *Psal.* xvii. 14. Oft-times they feel as much at their hand, as makes them smart by the rod : *Hab.* i. 12. *O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment, and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.* They always see as much of them, as occasions to them many a heavy heart, *vers.* 3. *Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me : and there are that raise up strife and contention.* Wherefore since God's people need the rod, it is preserved, and not flung in to the fire.

Mean while this tends to their good. The ungodly oblige them to pray, watch, live in the exercise of faith, more than otherwise they would do. Hence many times the most tender Christians are found among the most notoriously profane neighbours, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, who carried not so well in the cave. For as the godly are eye-sores to the wicked, so the wicked are often as whetstones and files to the godly.

2. They smart the sorer under their own afflictions : *Psal.* lxxiii. 10. *Therefore his people return hither : and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.* The prosperity of the wicked carries the afflictions of the godly to a pitch ; and sometimes to a dangerous pitch, through the sleight of *Satan* improving it against them. This was the case

case of *Asaph*, *Psal.* lxxiii. 12. 13. 14. Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. Job's friends acted Satan's part on that bottom, endeavouring to prove him an unsound man, because he was a man so afflicted.

But this also tends to their good. It makes them look more concernedly into their Bible, and find sweet and relief where otherwise they would find no more than others do; as we see in *Asaph's* case, *Psal.* lxxiii. 16. 17. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me: until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. And it makes them to look more narrowly into their own hearts, and to their sincerity, *Job* x. 7. It obliges them to live more by faith, and not by sight; to the exercise of hope, patience, &c.

Fourthly, In this slow method, God often carries on his awful yet holy work of hardening sinners. There is such a work: *Rom.* ix. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will, he hardeneth. And it is a most dreadful plague and judgment, whereby God ceasing to punish men for their sins one way, punishes them another way in a dreadful manner. This appears, if ye consider,

1. It is a spiritual stroke, lighting on the soul, and therefore more terrible than external strokes on people's bodies or substance, *Rom.* i. 28. Hereby the mind is blinded, the will doubly enslaved to lusts, and the conscience seared: A kind of stroke rise this day.

2. It is a stroke, whereby the disease of sin is increased, and the gospel-remedy is rendered ineffectual. The heart being hardened, the loose is given to lusts, that before were under some restraint, *Eph.* iv. 19. and the means of grace become useless, if not noxious; the hardened heart turning the food of the soul, as it were, to poison in effect, *Is.* vi. 10. *2 Cor.* iii. 16.

3. It is a fearful preparative to utter destruction, *Rom.* ix. 22. A nasty earthen vessel, that gets leave to contract more and more nastiness, and is not purged and cleansed, is designed to be broken in pieces, and thrown away: *Ezek.* xxiv. 13. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged

from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. So it is awful.

Yet it is a holy work in the hand of the Lord. God is holy in his hardening, as well as in his softening work, *Jf. vi. 3.* compared with *vers. 10.* For,

1. God hardens no soft hearts, hardens none but those who first harden themselves, *Rom. i. 28.* Men first shut their own eyes to the light, and then a just God blinds their eyes: they are wilful in their sin, and God gives them their will, *Hof. iv. 17.* For who can say, he is obliged to strive on with them still?

2. Sin is a meet punishment of sin, *Rom. i. 27.* And therefore it is just with God to punish sin by sin, to take off the restraint from those who cannot endure it; to let them fall into the mire, and lie in it, that will needs be in it.

Now, God in this slow method often carries on this hardening work; and that both on the sinner himself and others.

1. In this method oft-times, the sinner himself is hardened judicially. God is at much pains with sinners to bring them back from their sinful courses: he tryts them with rebukes from his word, convictions, terrors, and anxieties, and adds to these sharp crosses and afflictions. But they struggle against all these, and over the belly of them pursue their sins: so God judicially hardens them, and carries on that fearful work in the slow method.

1st, Denying or withdrawing his grace, and giving them up to their own lusts, *Psal. lxxxi. 12.* There is restraining grace given to many, who never get sanctifying grace; good motions, thoughts, and convictions are put into their hearts: these the Lord withdraws, and leaves men to the swing of their corruptions; as he did *Ephraim, Hof. iv. 17.* *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.* They rebel against the light, and the Lord lets it die out. They are impatient of restraint, and the Lord takes it off. They like the government of their lusts, and the Lord gives them up to them.

2^{dly}, Giving them up to Satan to be hardened by him, as the executioner of God's just vengeance, *2 Cor. iv. 3. 4.* Men resisting, grieving, and vexing the Holy Spirit of God, provoke him to depart, and to leave them in the hand of the evil spirit, who then finds easy work with them; as in *Saul's* case. Hereby Satan's power over them is confirmed, the opposition to his interest in them is much removed, and so his influence over them is increased.

God proceeding in the slow method with the sinner in this case, doth awfully carry on the hardening work upon him. In which we may observe,

(1.) Their impunity hardens them. They venture on sin, God in anger lets them go on unpunished, *Hos. iv. 14.* And Satan and their own corrupt hearts improve that to the encouraging and strengthening them in their sins. Thence a wind from hell rises that fills their sails. Hence in the text, *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*

(2.) Their prosperity in the world hardens them: *Psal. lxxiii. 5. 6.* *They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.* The hotter the sun shines, the clay becomes the harder: and the warmer the sun of worldly prosperity shines on the sinner given up to his own lusts and the power of Satan, he, like a dunghill, becomes the harder, and sends forth the more rank savour.

(3.) In the soft dealings of Providence with them, objects, occasions, and means to do their ill works, are justly laid before them: they are tempted, flattered, and encouraged by others. And thus the warm influence of providence on them in external things, which should lead them to repentance, is, by means of their own lusts to which they are left, turned hardening and ruining to them: *Prov. i. 32.* *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* These are to them like a full wind to a ship without ballast, in a storm.

(4.) Proper means for checking them are in the just judgment of God rendered ineffectual, and that hardens them. Thus it was with *Pharaoh*: the miracle of the rod turned into a serpent, waters into blood, bringing in the frogs, seemed to *Pharaoh's* eye-sight done by the magicians too. And thus were they rendered ineffectual to him.

(5.) Lastly, The adversity and frowns of Providence on the serious godly, harden them, *Job xii. 4. 5. 6.* These are improved, by the sleight of Satan, to the contempt of both the religious and religion.

2. In this method God carries on a hardening work upon ungodly spectators of it. Hence there is a *woe to the world, because of offences*, *Matth. xviii. 7.* The generality of men have so little sense of religion, and insight into the mysteries of

of Providence, that they are apt to think that that is the best way which is the most prosperous, *Prov. xix. 4.* Hence there was a generation that would needs make that the standard of religion; *Jer. xlv. 17. 18.* But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine. And so the Lord doth in his holy providence lay that method of it before worldly and carnal men, at which they, by reason of their own wilful blindness, do stumble, to their own ruin, *Mal. iii. 14. 15.* forecited.

Fifthly, The general method of Providence in managing the world, is soft to his adversaries, and sharp to his own children in this life: *1 Cor. xv. 19.* *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* *Rev. iii. 19.* *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* This is the general rule, though it admits of exceptions, both in the case of the one and the other. God's adversaries sometimes meet with sharp things, his children with soft. But the general and ordinary course of providence is soft to the former, and sharp to the latter.

This appears particularly in two things.

1. God's children are held shorter by the head, in point of particular rebukes of Providence, than his adversaries are. *1st,* God sharply noticeth many things in his own, that he will pass in others, and greater too. Hence said *Job, If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity,* chap. x. 14. The common proverb holds here, *One man had better steal a horse, than another look over the hedge.* A child of God many times pays dearer for a vain thought, than others for a vile action; for a rash word, than others for blasphemy and contrived wickedness. How did *Moses* smart for an unadvised word? *Psal. cvi. 32. 33.* *They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.* Compare *Num. xx. 10. 12.* *And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto*

unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them. But see Psal. lxxiii. 9. 10. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

2dly, When both meet with rebukes for an ill thing, his own oft-times get the sharpest. Hence the lamenting church says, Lam. i. 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger. The controversy for unworthy communicating was pleaded with some godly Corinthians, to the sickening of their bodies, yea even to death, 1 Cor. xi. 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

2. A lot of adversity is in a peculiar manner the lot of God's people in this life, and the world smiles most on its own friends: John xvi. 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Psal. lxxiii. 10. Therefore his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. In the case of the church and people of God in this life, adversity seems to be the rule and ordinary course, prosperity the exception: but in the case of the men of the world, prosperity the rule, and adversity the exception. This appears,

1st, From the scripture, wherein we find the rod of adversity the beaten path in which the saints under the Old and New Testament have walked: the godly often groaning under the weight of their own afflictions, and the weight of prosperous wickedness in their enemies. The Cainites build cities, and have the harp and organ among them; while the church dwelt still in tents: Abraham a stranger in the land of promise, while the cursed Canaanites enjoy it: Jacob's posterity in slavery in Egypt, while the Edomites were settled in their own land, having a king of their own. Perhaps among the Jews in Canaan worldly prosperity was more annexed to piety, agreeable to the dispensation they were under, wherein temporal promises bare great bulk. But consider that people in comparison with other nations, and
ye

ye will find their prosperity very short, in comparison of their neighbours, and their adversity very long: *Zech. i. 11. 12.* And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle-trees, and said, *We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.* Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, *O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?* But under the New Testament the thing is most clear. Our Saviour points out this as the stated method of Providence: *Luke vi. 20.—26.* And Jesus lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, *Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.* But woe unto you that are rich: for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full: for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now: for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets. *Chap. xvi. 25.* But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

2dly, From experience and observation. One needs but to open his eyes, and look about through the world, and he cannot miss to see the world's greatest favours bestowed on them who have least sense of God and religion; wickedness triumphant, while serious godliness is pressed down; sinners often laughing, while saints weep.

Now, this method becomes the divine wisdom. For,

(1.) At this rate the evil have a taste of good, and the good a taste of evil, *Luke xvi. 25.* forecited. The former, who will at length drink deep of endless sorrow, are patiently borne with, to bring them to repentance: the latter, who shall rejoice for evermore, have now the trial of a weeping time.

(2.) As a father is more concerned for, and exact in correcting of the faults of his own children, than of his servants; so is our Father in heaven with respect to his family.

ly. The more he loves, the more he corrects with his rod: *Amos* iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* There are some who are to dwell with him for ever: there are others who are to depart from him for ever. What wonder, that he is at more pains to purify the former than the latter!

(3.) This is most agreeable to the way he took with his own Son and his enemies. While Christ was in the world, he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; the wind blew in his face continually, till he was cruelly put to death on the cross. The axe lay at the root of the *Jewish* church and state, his enemies; yet was it not wielded against them all the time he was among them, nor till about forty years after. This was the pattern that is copied after in this method: *Rom.* viii. 29. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.*

Sixthly, Though the slow method seems strange to us short-sighted creatures, it is not at all strange being viewed in the glass of the infinite perfections of the divine nature. A thing will appear in a shallow river, that being cast into the sea will appear no more. We wonder at the slow method of providence while we look to men; but we will cease to wonder if we look to God, and observe, that,

1. God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, *Psal.* xc. 2. If men do not soon pursue their quarrels, death may snatch them away, and they can have no access more to do it: but however long the Lord delays pleading his quarrel, he can lose no time, for he is eternal.

2. In God's eternal duration there are no differences of time; all is present to him. Time is for measuring created beings, but not the infinite being. So a thousand years and one day are alike unto him, whatever odds there is betwixt them to us: *Psal.* xc. 4. *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.* This consideration the Apostle suggests, *2 Pet.* iii. 8. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

3. He sees exactly the time appointed for execution against every impenitent sinner, and will not let it pass beyond that, one moment: *Hab.* ii. 3. *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it*

will not tarry. We see the beginning and middle of things, but cannot foresee the end. God sees all at once. Well can he bear with ungodly sinners, for he sees their day coming with speed, *Psal. xxxvii. 13.* What needs haste in respect of God? for he sees the sinful creature is fading, and will drop down into a grave, ere long, *Psal. lxxviii. 38. 39.*

4. He knows what he minds to do, and none can let him: *Dan. iv. 37.* *All the King of heaven's works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.* The prince that is afraid of the rebels, will strive to crush them ere they gather to a head; but he that knows he can crush them when he will, may let them gather all their strength together. God can carry on the designs of his glory, by bearing long with impenitent sinners: *Rom. ix. 17.* *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.* Thus also he can laugh at the trial of the innocent: *Job ix. 23.* *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.* Like a father holding his child in his hands over a deep pool; the child cries, and the father smiles.

5. *Lastly,* He is infinitely blessed in himself; and nothing the creature can do against him, can hurt him; nor in the least disturb his repose in himself: *Job xxxv. 6. 8.* *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.* If the whole creation should conspire against him, opening their mouths against the heavens, and doing to the utmost of their power against him; he might condemn their impotent malice, they would be but like men running their heads against a rock. The longest interval of time cannot make him weary: *Is. xl. 28.* *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?*

Seventhly, There is a necessity for both the swift and slow methods being used by Providence in the government of the world; it is so corrupt and atheistical. And,

1. The swift method is necessary to shew, that there is a God to judge upon the earth: *Psal. lviii. 10. 11.* *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a*

God

God that judgeth in the earth. For as ordinary as the slow method is, there are never wanting instances now and then of swift process against ungodly sinners: which is necessary to bear testimony to the being of a God, and of a providence concerned in human affairs. And there are as many of these, as may give sufficient warning to all.

2. The slow method is necessary, to shew there is a judgment to come: *2 Theff. i. 4.—7. We ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, &c.* What the carnal world improves in behalf of *Atheism*, is necessary to prevent *Sadducism*: for if all mens wickedness were punished in this life, it would thence be concluded, that there were no after-reckoning: but there is never a sentence passed against an evil work, that is missed to be execute now, but is a pledge of the judgment to come.

Lastly, The slowest vengeance against impenitent sinners, will be sure vengeance; and the slower it is in coming, it will be the sorer when it comes: *Deut. xxxii. 35. To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.* The old world was spared a hundred and twenty years, but was swept away at length.

1. Let sinners be spared never so long, not one of all their ill works will, or can be forgotten. They may have forgot them themselves, but God never will. There is a book of remembrance of their ill, as well as of the saints good words and works: *Amos viii. 7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.* *Psal. i. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*

2. The longer sinners are spared, their counts will be the greater, and all will come on at once, *Luke xi. 50. 51. 1 Sam. iii. 12.* It is people's mercy, that God ceaseth not to be a reprover to them; as it is the mercy of weak people

to pay their debt by littles, whereas they are broken if it get leave to run on.

3. When it comes on the impenitent sinner, God will charge both the interest and the principal sum together. They shall not only pay for their ill works, but for their mercies, and the sparing they have gotten: *Rom. ii. 4. 5. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* What aggravated their sin, will aggravate their condemnation and punishment.

And how long soever the execution of the sentence against ungodly sinners, evil-workers, may be delayed, and how many external favours of providence be heaped on them; all will appear but small and short, when one considers,

1st, The severity of the execution when it comes. They will at length be cut asunder, *Matth xxiv. 51. In flaming fire he will take vengeance on them, 2 Thess. i. 8.* They will fall into the hands of the living God.

2^{dly}, The eternity of it. That is a killing aggravation in the sentence, *Depart into everlasting fire.* If the worm were once awakened, and set on them, it dieth not; the fire once kindled, will not be quenched.

USE I. of Information. What is said may inform us,

1. That present ease and prosperity in the world is not a sure sign of God's special favour, *Ecc. ix. 1. 2.* Indeed men are apt to construe it so; and Satan and the deceitful heart help them to draw such a conclusion. But so far is it from being such a sign, that it may very well consist with their being in a state of wrath, under a sentence of condemnation; and is so with many.

2. That present ease, impunity, and prosperity, is no security against the time to come. Men are ready to be secure upon it, and to dream that to-morrow will be as this day: *Psal. x. 6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.* But the mountain may be standing sure now, that ere long may be overturned. The sun shined fair on *Sodom*, the morning of that day in which God rained fire and brimstone on it. The rich man was full of thoughts of ease in that day, in the night whereof he was struck, *Luke xii. 18. 19. 20.*

3. There

3. There cannot be such worth in outward prosperity, nor such evil in affliction, as we generally imagine. For a holy, wise God would never heap what is really best on the objects of his wrath, and what is really worst on the objects of his love. Were there as much real value in the world's wealth, ease, and honour, health, strength, silver, gold, &c. as we imagine; or were there as much evil in trouble, adversity, &c. as we think, would they be so dealt, as that the greatest share of the former should be given to the condemned, and of the latter to the justified? It is owing to the weakness of human sight, that so much beauty appears in some human faces, and in some victuals we feed on. If they were looked to with a microscope, the beauty would disappear. Faith is the microscope here, *Eccl. i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 17. 18.*

4. God is a patient and long-suffering God, not subject to passions as we are, *2 Pet. iii. 9.* If he were liable to the transports of passion as we are, the world would have been many times burnt to ashes ere now; considering the provocations given to the eyes of his glory. But the infinite mind enjoys the profoundest serenity and calm, beholding all the confusions of evil-workers in the world.

5. *Lastly*, Sad and heavy strokes may be abiding a land and generation, though long warded off. Long has the Lord borne with this apostatizing generation in principle and practice; and long have we been threatened: and through the delay, we have been brought to say, *The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth*, *Ezek. xii. 22.* But a reprieve is no pardon; the cloud is still hanging over our heads; and it is to be feared, that some will live to see a fearful breaking of it.

USE 2. of *Exhortation.* And,

1. Let ungodly sinners be exhorted to repent of their evil works, and beware of abusing the divine patience with them. Ye have heard the slow method rationally accounted for: If hereafter ye will deceive yourselves, and turn the grace of God into wantonness, encouraging yourselves in sin from your impunity and prosperity; know, that ye are wilfully blind, that ye shall be inexcusable, and your blood will be on your own heads. But,

1st, Let the sense of gratitude move you to repentance, *Rom. ii. 4.* Think with yourselves, what case ye had been in, if God had struck you down, as he could, in the very act of your evil work; how you might have been beyond all hope

hope and possibility of recovery. You owe your life to the slow method of providence; his patience exercised towards you has kept your soul back from the pit. Therefore repent, and go no farther on.

2dly, Let the account ye have heard of the slow method, fright you from abusing it. I am sure, ye cannot but see now, that there is no ground to take encouragement to sin from it. Consider what has been said, and shew yourselves men. If ye go on to abuse it so, ye make a jest of a most serious and wise dispensation of providence. Ye turn your food into poison, and stumble at noon-day. And it will be a sure presage of everlasting ruin to you: *Hos. xiv. 9. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.*

2. Let all beware of censuring the slow method of providence with ungodly sinners, evil-workers. Take heed how ye speak on that head; beware of risings of the corrupt heart upon it. For however rationally ye think ye pronounce upon the matter, sooner or later ye shall be made to recant that sentence, either in mercy, as *Job* did, chap. xlii. 3. and as *Asaph* did, *Psal. lxxiii. 22.* or in wrath, *Mal. iii. 14. 15.* with 18. Consider,

1st, There may be a mystery in the dispensations of providence; but there can be no iniquity, error, or mistake: *Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.* Silently adore that wisdom and the deep design of providence which ye cannot see through, that certainly are in the slow method God uses with some ungodly sinners, evil-workers. Though ye cannot see how God's glory can miss to suffer by it, believe that God will doubtless get glory by it.

2dly, The mystery of that dispensation in the case of every ungodly sinner, will be opened out before the world at length, to the satisfaction of all humble waiters; and the confusion of the impenitent evil-workers, scoffers, and murderers: *1 Cor. iv. 5. Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.* Be not rash, wait the end, and then ye shall be allowed to judge: *Prov. xviii. 13. He that answereth a matter before he heareth it,*

it is folly and shame unto him. But why should ye judge of the web of providence ere it be wrought out?

3. Fret not at, neither envy prosperous wickedness: *Prov. xxiii. 17. Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long. Psal. xxxvii. 1. Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* Who would envy the state of a condemned man, though he have a long reprieve, and enjoy many comforts in the iron house? Such is the case of the ungodly, whatever world's ease they have. And therefore they are just objects of pity and compassion, but not of envy. One had better be a pardoned one in the depth of worldly misery, than in a state of wrath and condemnation in the top of worldly felicity. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matth. xvi. 26.* Consider,

1st, Such fretting and envy proceeds from a distempered heart: *Psal. lxxiii. 22. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. See Mal. iii. 15.* It is the produce of a mixture of ignorance, rashness and inconsideration, unbelief and worldly-mindedness. And there needs only to cure it, to have our eyes opened, to see things in their true state; the laying aside of unruly passions; faith, and due weanedness from the world: *Psal. xxxvii. 1. 2. Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*

2^{dly}, Every one's state is to be rated, according as it is before God. If God be one's friend, he is a happy man, though the world should never give him its good word nor kind look. If God is one's enemy, he is a miserable man, though all the men and things of the world should favour him to his wish. For as is one's state with God, so is his present safety; and so will be his well or woe through eternity.

4. Let all learn to regulate their conduct by the example of God in this his government of the world, so far as it is proposed for our imitation: *Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.* And we may learn from it,

1st, To be patient and slow to anger. How ill does it become us to be so ready to fire at every provocation, against our fellow-creatures; when the highest One uses so much patience towards us? *Matth. xviii. 23. &c.* The
more

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more meekly and patiently one carries himself, he is the more like unto God; who hath set us an example.

2dly, To learn to bear with sinners, in order to the seeking of their recovery: *Gal. vi. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* Not that we are to suffer sin upon him, so far as it is in our power to remove it. God can bring good out of evil, but we cannot do that: therefore that part of the conduct of Providence towards the ungodly, we are not called to imitate. But let us be followers of God, in dealing still with the worst of sinners to recover them, and not give them over for hopeless.

3dly, To do good to the worthless, unthankful, and evil: *Luke vi. 35. Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.* It is a naughty world, that people had need of such a principle to prompt them to do good to others. If we confine our good to those that do good to us, what do we more than others? If we confine it to those worthy of it, we do it only for the creature's sake. But if we propose to follow the example of God, we will do good to all as we have access, and act from a Christian principle in it.

5. *Lastly*, Let us not be secure with respect to the case of the land and generation we live in. Let us not think that God has forgotten the iniquity of our fathers in their perfidy and cruelty against the godly for his cause; or that he approves of the course of apostasy from the truth and holiness of the gospel this day, whereby the present generation has entered itself heir to the apostatizing, persecuting generation that went before. The sentence is not execute, yet it is but delayed; therefore we may look for it, if repentance prevent it not.

Doct. III. God's delay of execution is often miserably abused by sinners, to the filling of their hearts to do evil, and sinning more and more.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Point out the abuse of God's patience in the delay of execution, that ungodly sinners make, to the filling of their hearts to do evil.

II. Shew

II. Shew how it comes to pass, that sinners so abuse God's patience with them.

III. Make application of the doctrine.

I. I shall point out the abuse of God's patience in the delay of execution, that ungodly sinners make, to the filling of their hearts to do evil.

1. They abuse it to carnal security: *Psal. x. 6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.* Finding that God does not execute his threatenings against them, they conclude they are in no hazard: and they begin to look on them as mere scarecrows, *vers. 5. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight.* And so they go on securely in their ungodly courses. Hence it is that the execution overtakes them quite unexpectedly: *1 Thess. v. 2. 3. The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

2. They abuse it to a sensual life, wherein their aim is not to keep a clean conscience, but to gratify their senses, as their circumstances in the world will permit; as the rich man did, *Luke xii. 19. I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* So the more that Providence favours them in external things, the more sensual they are, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: *Hos. xiii. 6. According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.* Hence the lives of many are trifled away, and wholly spent in making provision for the flesh, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And that is endless business: *Eccl. i. 8. All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*

3. They abuse it to impudence in sin, *Jer. vi. 14. 15.* When God strikes men in a sinful course, they are ashamed readily as pointed at by the hand of Heaven, as transgressors: but when men prosper in a sinful course, they put on a brow of brass, they gather a stock of impudence in sin, as if Providence had given them a patent for wickedness: *Psal. lxxiii. 5. 6. They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride com-*

passeth them about as a chain : violence covereth them as a garment.

4. They abuse it to contempt of God, and all that is sacred : *Psal. lxxiii. 9. They set their mouth against the heavens ; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Agur saw the danger of this snare, and therefore prayed thus, Prov. xxx. 8. 9. Remove far from me vanity and lyes ; give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. Israel fell into it : Deut. xxxii. 15. Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked : thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness ; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. The ungodly have not love to God : if they have any thing that way of such affection, it is fear of him, a slavish fear of his wrath, springing from the love of themselves : this fear they lose also, when God delays to strike. And so it issues in contempt, as is natural in the case of one we love not, nor fear neither. And then all that is sacred is despised.*

5. They abuse it to sinning more diffusively, giving loose reins to their several lusts, *Jer. vii. 9. 10. One sin makes way for another, and prosperity in a sinful course gives many occasions of sin : and as the vitious stomach, the more it receives, breeds the more ill humours ; so the more one prospers in a sinful course, the more vile does he grow.*

6. They abuse it to sinning more eagerly : *Eph. iv. 19. Being past feeling, they have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. The more that lusts are fed, the more strong they grow, and carry out the man more violently to satisfy them. So that the heart in that case is like a ship having a full gale of wind, and is eagerly set to do evil.*

7. Lastly, They abuse it to incorrigibleness and obstinacy in sin, *Jer. xxii. 21. A prosperous sinner quickly gets above reproofs, Hos. iv. 4. As affliction tends to humble, prosperity puffs up an ungracious heart : and the heart swelled with pride scorns to stoop, till God by his grace or judgments do lay it.*

II. *How comes it to pass that sinners so abuse God's patience with them ?*

1. Sin reigning in the ungodly, fear of wrath is their highest

highest motive to good, and most forcible restraint from evil: and so when that restraint is taken off by the delay of execution again and again; the heart naturally goes to its own bias, and is like the wild ass's colt snuffing up the wind at her pleasure. The love of holiness for itself, and likeness to God, would prevent it.

2. They mistake the design of providence. They misinterpret the slow method of procedure with them, *Psal. l. 21.* The design of it is to lead them to repentance; but that they notice not. But they construe it, as if God approved of their ways, or had such a regard for them, that he will not be so angry with them, as one would make them believe: they cannot think that he is so very angry at their sin, while they prosper in it by his providence.

3. There is a root of Atheism in the hearts of all men naturally, and it reigns in the ungodly: *Psal. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* Unless God be every now and then proving his being, providence, and justice to them, by his works of judgment on themselves; they are apt to forget him, and deny him. It is the interest of men wedded to their lusts, that there were not a God; or, if there be, that he were not such as the scripture represents him. So they are ready to entertain every thing that may favour it.

4. *Lastly,* The Lord often in that way carries on a holy hardening work. In which case, Satan and the evil heart conspire to this abuse.

USE 1. of *Information.* This lets us see,

1. That we need not be surprised to see sinners escaping with one evil work fall into another, and so on; growing still more vile, the more outward favours are heaped on them. It is but a fulfilling of this scripture. Providence often has an odd aspect in our view, till we carry the matter to the Bible; and there we see it exactly answering the word.

2. It is good for men to be under frequent rebukes of Providence. Affliction is sore, but it is the more safe lot, *Psal. cxix. 71.* In the one men are put in mind of their sins, in the other they are apt to forget both their God and themselves. It would be profitable for the afflicted to consider the wretched abuse the heart is ready to make of ease and prosperity.

3. Slow vengeance will be sore vengeance, when it comes. For the longer it is a-coming, sin goes the deeper:

the more God spares impenitents, the more they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; the counts run on, and swell the more. So whether we consider it coming on in time or eternity, the heavier will it be.

4. *Lastly*, Great is the corruption of human nature. See it here as in a glass, how the mercy and goodness of God is despised by the corrupt heart, that will not be drawn by such cords of love. See how it turns our food into poison, and that which should be for our welfare into a snare and trap. See it an ungrateful nature, apt to be insensible of the ties of gratitude to our best benefactor.

USE 2. of *Exhortation*. Take heed of abusing the patience of a long-suffering God, of turning his grace, goodness, and forbearance into wantonness, of your heart filling to do evil while God spares.

1. Consider the evil of it. There is in it,

1st, An over-valuing of ourselves, as if we deserved not to be worse treated, and therefore were nothing obliged to our benefactor: *Hab. i. 16. They sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag: because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.* Men, who are not bettered by God's goodness, their hearts swell in pride, as patience is used towards them: *Psal. lxxiii. 5-6. They are not in trouble as other men: neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain: violence covereth them as a garment.*

2^{dly}, An undervaluing of others whom providence doth not treat so softly. Hence *Job* said, chap. xii. 5. *He that is ready to slip with his feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.* How lightly do many that are at ease, look on the heavy things others suffer? They are as unconcerned with them, as if they were creatures of an inferior rank. Were men sensible of God's goodness, in his patience towards them, it would make them sympathise with others, wondering that it is not worse with themselves, 2 *Chron. xxviii. 10.*

3^{dly}, A monstrous abuse of the creature, and comforts of life, *Hos. ii. 8.* The use of the creature was given to man, for his comfort indeed; but always in subserviency to the glory of God. But abusers of divine patience turn the weapons against God, which he has armed them with for his service: *Deut. xxxii. 15. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him,*
and

and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They are called adulterers and adulteresses, James iv. 4. because they bestow God's good gifts on their lusts, *vers.* 3. Hence the creation groans under the burden of the ungodly, evil-workers, *Rom.* viii. 22.

4thly, A denying the due tribute to our Sovereign Lord and King. All that we have we hold of him, in the way of free mercy, *Lam.* iii. 22. The king in his palace, and the beggar in his cottage, is God's tenant: our food and raiment, coarse or fine, with all conveniencies of life, are given us of God. We can pay him nothing, but the tribute of praise in our lips and lives: and that is denied. Hence,

5thly, Monstrous ingratitude, a sin of a deep dye: *Deut.* xxxii. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?* It is a devilish disposition of heart, that cannot be won with benefits; a base spirit, which good done them cannot engage. But abusers of mercies, the more God loads them with benefits, the more they load him with their provocations. Ah! shall men sin, because grace abounds? shall their hearts be filled in them to do evil, because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed?

6thly, Practical blasphemy, as if men should say, they are hired to be vile, *Jer.* vii. 9. 10. Abusers of the doctrine of the gospel, to licentiousness, make Christ the minister of sin: therefore abusers of the kind providence of God to that end, make God in his government of the world so. While Heaven smiles in outward favours on men, and they use them so, the language of that practice is blasphemous.

7thly, Much Atheism and contempt of God. It is a denial of his providence, as if he had no concern about human affairs, *Ezek.* ix. 9. It makes a jest of his threatenings in his word, *2 Pet.* iii. 3. 4. It misrepresents his holy nature, *Psal.* l. 21. or bids him defiance, *Is.* v. 19. and throws off his yoke, *Psal.* xii. 4.

2. Consider the danger of it. If ye go on so,

1st, Ye will make your recovery ay more and more hopeless, *Jer.* vi. 29. 30. Sin is a current, the farther it runs, the deeper it grows: and the more goodness men sin against, the more is their heart hardened, and their consciences seared. Withal it provokes God to give up with men, leave striving with them, and give them up to their lusts, and to the devil, to be hardened more.

2dly, If

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2dly If God have any thoughts of good towards you, it will make your recovery more difficult. Strong diseases must have strong remedies: and long abused patience will make broken bones, at best; if ye be saved, it will be so as by fire. At best ye are but laying up for bitter repentance: the more loose and licentious one is in an unconverted state, the more severe pangs and throes he will readily find in the new birth. Witness *Manasseh, Paul, &c.*

3dly, Be it as it will, that patience will have an end; ye shall not sin on and God spare on very long. The coupling of these two will be broken, and God will shew you that he will bear no longer with your abuse: *Eccl. vii. 6. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.* Ye will find God will awake to judgment, and wake you out of your dream; and ye will either be his converts, or broken to pieces by him.

4thly, The breaking up of patience with you is likely to be very sudden and surprising, *1 Thess. v. 2. 3.* So was it with the rich man, *Luke xii. 19. 20.* God bore long with the old world, but at length the deluge came on like a thunder-clap, in the midst of their carnal mirth and jollity. God does it in just recompense of long abused patience.

Lastly, Abused patience, when it breaks off, will turn to fury*; and the longer God has delayed execution, the more severe will it be when it comes on, *Lev. xxvi. 28.* The more a man has had in trust, his accounts will be found the greater, and the harder, to clear off, when once the creditors fall on him. It is most pleasing to the flesh, to live in ease and fulness: but the abuse of these will make a more fearful reckoning, than otherwise.

DOCT. IV. *Though the execution be never so slow, it will be sure, against impenitent sinners, evil-workers.*

In handling this doctrine, it is proposed to shew,

I. In what respects the execution against impenitent sinners, evil-workers, will be sure.

II. That the execution against them will be sure.

III. Apply the doctrine.

I. *In what respects will the execution against impenitent sinners, evil-workers, be sure?* It will be sure, in respect of,

* *Patentia saepe loca fit furor.*

1. The full tale of their evil works: *Eccl. xii. 14.* For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Neither the multitude of them, nor the long time they lie over unreckoned for, will cause any of them to be forgotten. But the ill works of the several periods of the sinner's life, will be charged home upon him exactly. For God keeps a register of all their evil works, a book that will be opened at the last day, *Rev. xx. 12.*; and has sworn that none of them shall be forgotten, *Amos viii. 7.*

2. The whole aggravations of their evil works, *Jude* *vers. 15.* A just God will remember against impenitent sinners, the manner as well as the matter of their sins; the time, place, and other circumstances of their ill works, will be remembered against them. Their abused mercies, the light they rebelled against, the warnings from the word and providence they slighted, the effects their ill example had on others, the snares others were intangled therein by their means, &c. will all be charged on them.

3. The conviction of their own consciences, *Jude* *vers. 15.* Sinners now find ways to cloke and cover their evil works, to deny or mince them: and few will now suffer themselves to be admonished or reproved, but they have a great deal to say in their own defence; but the lying lips, and tongues that speak proudly, will then be put to silence, *Matth. xxii. 12.* The light of conscience will then be like broad day-light, that is now as the darkness of the night. It will convince them clearly of what shall be laid to their charge, that they can no more deny it, *Jehn viii. 9.*; and of the justice of God in proceeding against them, *Psal. l. 6.*

4. Just punishment brought on them for their evil works, *1 Theff. v. 3.* While God delays, men dream with *Agag*, that the bitterness of death is past: but they will find themselves deceived, as he when *Samuel* took the sword and hewed him in pieces before the Lord. They cannot escape the due demerit of their sin at length; but as the needle draws the thread after it, sin will draw wrath. Judgment is sin's shadow.

5. The correspondence there will be between their sin and punishment. God will write every ungodly sinner's sin in his punishment. Oft-times it is so here with them, as in the case of *Adonibezek*, *Judg. i. 7.*; but always so hereafter, as in the case of the rich man, *Luke xvi. 19.* with 24. Hence the worm is said never to die; signifying the eternal remorse they

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they shall have for their evil works. And the degrees of punishment will be suited to the degrees of their sin. They that have committed many sins, shall have many stripes.

6. Its inevitableness, when once patience is come to an end : *Luke xiii. 24. 25. Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us ; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. The door of mercy may stand open long, but it will be shut at length. And then there is no more escaping.* For,

1st, Omniscience will find out the sinner, and discover his most secret crimes, and overthrow all his defences : *Heb. iv. 13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight : but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Psal. cxxxix. 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? There is no blinding of the eye of an omniscient Judge.*

2^{dly}, Divine power will bring him under, and cause him to stand and receive the just reward of his deeds : *Job ix. 4. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength : who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered ? There will be no resisting of omnipotence : the stoutest sinner will be poured out like water before an angry God.*

3^{dly}, The divine severity will proceed over the belly of all intreaties, made out of time : *Luke xiii. 24. 25. forecited.* They that slight mercy while God's time for it lasts, will get no mercy when God's time is out, and theirs is come.

7. *Lastly*, Its eternity. The execution once on, will never be off ; once begun, will never end : *Mark ix. 44. In hell the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* While God is, he will pursue the quarrel. The ungodly sin on as long as they are in the world, and live as long as they will, they will not alter their course : and God will pursue them for ever, when once he has broke off.

II. *That the execution against them will be sure, appears,*

1. From the inviolable regard God has to the honour of his holy law, *Jf. xlii. 21.* Sinners trample on it, slight its commands, and despise its threatenings ; but God highly regards

gards it, as that wherein he has eminently expressed the holiness of his nature. If sinners then honour it not in the way of duty, it will be honoured upon them in a way of judgment. God's regard to his law may be seen clearly,

1st, In the works of providence. As soon as sin entered into the world, and the law was broken, the face of providence on the world was quite changed. And it has blown continually since in the face of the creation less or more, *Rom. viii. 22.* Oft-times it has risen to violent storms, to avenge the quarrel of the dishonour of the holy law by sinners. Remember how, in that quarrel, *Adam* was driven out of Paradise, the world drowned by the flood, *Sodom* burnt, *Jerusalem* destroyed, with the many awful strokes brought on impenitent sinners in later times.

2^{dly}, In the work of redemption. God chose some from eternity unto salvation: but being breakers of the law, they behoved to be redeemed, and the price paid to the full reparation of the honour of the law. Christ the Son of God was their Redeemer; but that the law's honour might be seen to, he met with no sparing: *Rom. viii. 32.* *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* So God wrote his regard to the law in the salvation of his elect, and blood of his Son.

2. The truth and veracity of God insures the execution. He has said, he will do it: *Gen. ii. 17.* *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* His Son has intimated to us from heaven, that impenitent sinners shall not escape: *Luke xiii. 3.* *I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Every leaf of the scripture almost, has something to this purpose: and *hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* *Num. xxiii. 19.* God's truth must either fail, or ungodly sinners be reckoned with at length.

3. The justice of God requires it: *Gen. xviii. 25.* *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Men may be unjust judges, but God cannot. He will give every transgression a just recompense of reward: for it is in his power to do it, and his nature requires it. He hates sin, and cannot but hate it; and therefore though he delay for a time, he will punish.

4. The constant conduct of providence hitherto confirms it. There have been multitudes of ungodly in the world; but may we not put the question, *Job ix. 4.* *Who hath hardened*

hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Some have indeed been long spared, but did they not at length either bow or break before him? What came of the giants in the old world, of Pharaoh, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? These things happened for warnings to us. And if any have escaped during life, is there not sufficient evidence of execution on them in another world? as is evident from the case of the rich man, Luke xvi.

5. *Lastly, The peremptory appointment of the day of general judgment, puts it out of question: Acts xvii. 30. 31. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. The Judge is named for that effect already, the commission to him for that end has passed the seals in his resurrection; it is to be general, all must be judged by him; yea the sentence against the ungodly is conceived already, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

For Use I shall drop a word to,

1. The ungodly, evil-workers. And to you I would say, 1st. Let not your impunity for the present, make you secure for the time to come; as is the case of the wicked man, *Psalm x. 6. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. As sure as ye think your mountain now stands, it may suddenly be overturned; yea it shall assuredly, if ye repent not. God is giving you space to repent: do not trifle and dream it away, lest ye repent it when it is too late.*

2^{dly}, Let not your observation of the prosperity of other sinners, encourage and harden you in your sinful course; as it did those, *Mal. iii. 15. And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Ye have seen much of their sinful course, and of God's patience. But ye have not seen the end of it yet: Is. xvii. 11. In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow. Many a day has begun fair, and held on long so, that has had a foul evening. And whatever ye have observed of them, their prosperity in their ill course*

course shall either end in bitter repentance, or in their destruction, or else the word of truth fails.

3dly, Take the alarm in time, and flee from the wrath to come: *Is. lv. 6. 7. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Know ye cannot prosper to the end, in your loose and licentious ways. Ye must come to Christ by faith, and leave the world lying in wickedness; must break off your sins by repentance; or else ye will perish. If ye do it not, ye will mind that ye have been fairly warned, and lament for ever your slighting of it.

2. To the godly I would say,

1st, Beware of entertaining any idol of jealousy in your heart, wherewith the Lord may be provoked against you. He is impartial in his judgments, and even his own shall not escape: *Is. xlii. 24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he, against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.* Though being in Christ ye have shut the gulf as to condemnation, ye may be severely chastised; and ye may get broken bones for your transgressions, though ye cannot lose your souls.

2dly, Be not discouraged in the Lord's way, because in it ye meet with many sore trials, while others that are far from it go at ease. The work-ox goes with the yoke on his neck, while the slaughter-ox is full fed. But the former is preserved, while the latter is slain and hewed in pieces.

3. Lastly, To all I would say,

1st, Know that God is a holy jealous God. The way of sin is dangerous, and there will be no peace in the end of it.

2dly, Let us prepare to meet our God in the way of his judgments. God's proceedings against the land are slow, but they are like to be sure and fore. He has made the earth to quake beneath us, shown his anger from the face of the heavens above us.

The Sin, Folly, and Danger of Mens calling
Christ their Lord, and not yielding Obedience
to his Laws;

O R,

The Sinfulness and Hazard of a Profession of
Religion, without a correspondent Practice.

Several SERMONS, preached at *Etterick*,
in Summer 1728.

LUKE vi. 46.

*And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which
I say?*

THERE was, together with the disciples, a great
multitude gathered to hear Christ, and to be healed
by him, vers. 17. Many of them pretended a great regard
for him; but it went no farther than good words. Our
Lord tells them, that such is every man, good or bad, ac-
cording as his life is, vers. 44. 45. *For every tree is known
by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor
of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man, out of
the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is
good: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart,
bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of
the heart, his mouth speaketh.* And he closely applies this
to their conscience in the text. Wherein we have,

1. A concession. He grants they made a fair profession;
they called him *Lord, their Lord*. They owned his autho-
rity and Lordship over them, as if they were his subjects
and servants ready to receive and obey his commands. They
addressed themselves to him for his help, one and another
crying, *Lord, help me*, pleading to receive benefit by him

as their Lord. And this they did at times with much seeming zeal and concern, *Lord, Lord.*

2. A charge. He charges them with being nothing like this in their practice. Though they called him *their Lord*, they carried not themselves at all as his subjects and servants. Though they would have him to do for them, they would do nothing for him. In his preaching and life, he laid their duty before them: but though they owned him for their Lord, they shewed no regard in their practice to what he said, no conformity to his doctrine and example.

3. An expostulation. He puts them to consider the inconsistency of these things, and the unaccountableness of yoking together a profession and a practice that destroyed one another. A lord and a subject or servant are relatives; to the one it belongs to command, to the other to obey, *Mal. i. 6.* Why will ye plead the relation, and yet throw off the duty of the relation? "If you call me your Lord, why do ye not what I say or bid you? If you will not do what I say or bid you, why do ye call me your Lord?"

Two doctrines are deducible from the text thus explained.

DOCT. I. *There are who call Christ their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.*

DOCT. II. *It lies on mens consciences before the Lord, to take it home to themselves, to consider and answer it, how they come to call Christ their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.*

I shall handle these doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. *There are who call Christ their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.*

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Consider mens calling Christ their Lord.

II. Consider their not doing the things which he says, notwithstanding of their calling him their Lord.

III. Shew how it comes to pass, that people call Christ Lord, and their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing what he says.

IV. Apply

IV. Apply the doctrine.

I. I will consider *mens calling Christ their Lord.*

Under this head, I will shew,

1. How men call Christ their Lord.

2. What they do call Christ, that call him their Lord.

3. What is the import of their calling him Lord.

First, I will shew how men call Christ their Lord. Men call him their Lord,

1. Professing Christianity. *Christians* is the name of Christ's disciples who owned him for their Lord and Master: *Acts xi. 26. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* As ye are called Christians, ye are called by his name, owing him for your Lord and Master: *Matth. xxiii.*

10. *One is your Master, even Christ.* Some, that they may take to themselves a liberty, which others may not, will pretend they do not make a profession. Strange! Christians and yet not professors! Can there be a more holy profession, than that of Christianity, whereof Christ is the head? *Heb. iii. 1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* Nay, at that rate ye take the name, and throw off the thing.

2. Being baptized in his name, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* They are thereby externally marked for his subjects and servants, and renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. It is a badge of subjection to Christ, which the members of the visible church have taken on, to distinguish them from the world, whereof Satan is the god; while Christ is the Lord and God of the church.

3. Praying unto him, or to God in his name, *Acts vii. 59. Dan. ix. 17.* Every praying person, so far as he prays like a Christian, calls Christ his Lord, and begs his help; though many do little consider what that requires of them in their practice.

4. Attending the assemblies of his people to hear his word, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31.* The Lord Christ has appointed these assemblies for declaring his will to his people, as to what he will do for them, and what he will have them to do: and the very coming thither in a way of outward reverence, is a calling him Lord, from whom we are to learn our duty.

5. Consenting personally to the covenant, *Is. xlv. 5.* Thereby they say, he is, and shall be for ever their Lord, and

and that they shall be his only, wholly, and for ever. And at whatever time any have given such consent, they have no power to retract it after. Whether ever they shall renew it again or not, it stands recorded before God, and they will be judged by him accordingly.

6. *Lastly*, Partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The very name of that ordinance bears the partakers to call him so, *1 Cor. xi. 23. 26.* And it is a very solemn profession before the world, angels, and men, that he is our Lord, and we give up with all other lords. We take Heaven's seal upon it, and in a manner make oath that it is so.

Secondly, I will shew what they do call Christ, that call him their Lord.

1. They call him their Lord God; as *Thomas* did, *John xx. 28. My Lord, and my God.* They own him to be God their Creator, who made them, and preserves and sustains them, to be their Sovereign Lord, the Most High God with his Father and Spirit, unless they declare the contrary. For so the universal church of Christ on earth do understand Christ to be the Lord, *Rom. ix. 5.* however lightly men let of his commands.

2. Their Lord Proprietor, Master, and Owner, however little regard they show to the will of his providence and precepts, *Rom. xiv. 9.* For as all things are his by creation, so the Father has by a new title made him heir of all things, Lord of all, which is declared in the gospel, *Acts x. 36.* And so the head of every man is Christ.

3. Their Lord Redeemer, *Exod. xx. 2.* however unsuitably they walk to the redemption purchased by him. For so his people understand him to be our Lord, who bought us with his precious blood, paying our ransom while we were captives of sin and Satan, giving himself for us.

4. Their Lord Husband, however refractory and disobedient they prove to him: *Jer. iii. 14. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. Hi. liv. 5. Thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.* And so they own their obligation to be subject to him, faithful and obedient till death. For as he is Lord, he is a Lord Head and Husband, to his church.

5. *Lastly*, Their Lord King, however rebellious they be: *H. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, he will save us.* They own him to be King in *Zion*, having power and royal dominion over

over them, to command, reward, and punish, as they carry themselves towards him.

Thirdly, What is the import of their calling him Lord? Men calling him so, do in effect own, acknowledge, and profess,

1. His undoubted authority to command and prescribe duty to them: owning him as their Lord Husband, King, and God, they cannot deny but he has authority to bind them with laws. The husband claims authority over his spouse, the king over his subjects; and shall not God claim authority over his own creatures? All these meet together in Christ our Lord; so, by our own confession, he has authority over us.

2. The justice and equity of his commands: *Rom. vii. 12. The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* Husbands and kings among men, may require unjust things of their relatives, through their own perverseness or blindness: but he being our Lord God, is essentially just, and can command nothing but what is truly good. Will we venture to attack the holiness of God, to accuse his commands of injustice, for an excuse of our neglect of them?

3. Our absolute obligation to obey him. If he is our Lord, we owe him an illimited subjection, obedience without disputing of his commands, *Psal. cxix. 4.* and a resignation to his providence without reserve, *Matth. xx. 15.* As the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are we in his. The potsherds of the earth may strive with one another, but shall they strive with their Maker?

4. The strongest ties upon us to be for him. If he is our Proprietor and Redeemer, are we not bound by all the ties of honour and gratitude to be wholly his? Do we say, he redeemed us from death, and can we deny but we are bound to live for him? Has he redeemed us by dying for us, in our room and stead, and so saved us from dying eternally; what possible stronger incentive can there be to obedience?

5. *Lastly*, The expectation of happiness from him. Calling him our Lord, we expect from him and by him, the pardon of our sin, the favour of God, and a part in the kingdom of heaven, *Matth. vii. 21.* We know that he is not only Lord of this world, but of the other world; and so we raise our expectation accordingly.

II. I will consider *mens not doing the things which he says, notwithstanding of all this.* We may take it up in three things.

1. Christ as a Lord prescribes duty to his subjects. He has not an empty title of lordship and dominion, but is a Lawgiver: *Is. xxxiii. 22. He is our Lawgiver.* And the law of the ten commands, in their spirituality and extent, is his law, binding by his authority on all that call him Lord, *Exod. xx. 2. 3. &c.* As he is the Lord our God, he claims absolute and illimited subjection and obedience of us; as he is our Proprietor, he claims the absolute disposal of us; as he is our Redeemer, he requires our living wholly to him; as he is our Husband, he demands our being subject to him in love, faithfulness, and obedience till death, yea for ever; and as he is our King, he requires the duty of faithful subjects, and to have no commerce with his enemies.

2. He intimates his will to them as to their duty. He says what he would have them to do. We have his written laws in the Bible, which is God's word to every one into whose hand it comes. His ministers, as his messengers, do in his name proclaim his laws, and require obedience to them. Conscience within mens breasts testifies the necessity of obedience. So that none can pretend ignorance. If they be ignorant of his will, it is affected; they desire not to know it; as those do, *Job xxi. 14. who say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*

3. Yet men neglect it, and regard it not in their practice. They plead the relation to him, but make no conscience of the duty of it. He has laid down their duty in laws and commands, and has intimate it to them: but they take no heed to regulate their practice according to them. He says what things he would have them to do, but they do them not.

1st, They have no due sense of their being absolutely bound up to his will, but fancy themselves to be at some liberty to walk according to their own, as if the government were divided betwixt Christ and themselves: *Psal. xli. 4. Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own: who is lord over us?* They do not feel the tie of the yoke of Christ always upon them, but are like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, skipping at ease according to their own pleasure.

2^{dly}, They frame not their life according to his will. Their habitual walk and practice is not holy, but loose, li-

centious, untender, carnal, and like the world, not like the followers of Christ; like the *Ephesians* in their unconverted state, *Eph. ii. 2.* who walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. They attend ordinances, and perform some religious duties: but look into the strain of their conversation, it is no wise Christ-like, but world-like; contrary to that exhortation, *Rom. xii. 2.* *Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

3dly, They never set themselves to do all that he says; contrary to what the Psalmist did, *Psal. cxix. 6.* who had respect unto all God's commandments. This one or other thing that he says, they do: but they were never brought to a compliance with the things he says without reserve. They pick and chuse out some things, but they reject others: A clear evidence, that his authority which is stamped on all his commands, has little weight with them, *Jam. ii. 11.*

4thly, They habitually do against what he says, making their own lusts and inclinations their law; like those who said, *Jer. ii. 25.* *I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* They call him their Lord; but Satan and their lusts are really their lords, to whom they yield their obedience, being captives at their pleasure.

Lastly, They do nothing purely because he says it, else they would endeavour to do all. In what they do, they have other ends than to please him: they do it to please themselves, for their own profit, pleasure, or safety.

III. The third general head is, to shew how it comes to pass, that people call Christ Lord, and their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing what he says. The springs of this ruining practice, that so prevails, are many: As,

1. The want of a thorough change in their nature: *Luke vi. 43. 44.* *A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes.* There is some change made on them, therefore they call Christ Lord; it is not carried through, therefore they do not what he says. Hence they are neither cold nor hot; they are neither professed enemies, nor cordial friends; like the *Laodiceans*, of whom our Lord said, *Rev. iii. 15.* *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot.*

1st, Good

1st, Good education and religious company embalms some dead souls; but still they want the principle of the Spirit of life; like those of whom the Apostle says, *Jude* ver. 19. *These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.* So they continue dead in sin still, and their course of life becomes abominable with dead works, till in end they are as twice dead, ver. 12.

2dly, The gospel being new to some, makes a reel among their affections; as it did among the stony-ground hearers, *Matth. xiii. 20. 21.* *He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.* So that they have some liking of the gospel, and begin to look kindly towards the way of God: but it changes not their hearts, ver. 21. And the newness going away, these affections wear off, and they begin to appear in their own colours of black nature. Hence we have many, who, while they were springing up in youth, blossomed fair, and solemnly gave their names to Christ at sacraments; but being grown up, turn stark naught.

3dly, They get some new light into their heads, but no new life into their hearts. This was the case of many of *John's* hearers, who afterwards withered away; concerning whom Christ said, *John v. 35.* *He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.*

4thly, Many get awakening grace, that never get converting grace. Their convictions bring them to call Christ Lord; but they living strangers to the work of conversion, cannot do the things which he says.

2. Entertaining wrong notions of religion. They form to themselves such notions of religion, as leave them at liberty in the course of their walk. They think that is religion to call Christ Lord in performing duties of worship, praying, &c. and consider not that the substance of religion lies in holy, tender walking. *Tit. ii. 11. 12.* *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* Hence having done these duties of worship, they are at no more care to keep their hearts in the Lord's fear all the day long; but, on the contrary, can take the great

er liberty to themselves in loose walking; as the whore did, Prov. vii. 14. 15. *I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.* Hence publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before such persons. (2.) They think that faith will save them, though it be dead, idle, and unactive; contrary to what the Apostle saith, James ii. 14. *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?* vers. 26. *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* They do not consider, that that faith is not saving faith, which is so. Hence they can take a great deal of liberty in the way of sin, and put off repentance from time to time, even to a deathbed, upon the confidence that their faith in Christ will save them. Such have been of old, and still are, Jude vers. 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* There is no true faith but what purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9. and sanctifies the whole man; and the salvation by faith, is salvation from sin.

3. Reigning unbelief. Of this our Lord complained, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* Whatever pretences there are to believing in Christ, the unholiness of the lives of men is a convincing evidence, that unbelief is reigning at bottom with most of us: *Jf. liii. 1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The holiness of God, the spirituality of his law, his hatred of sin, and how severely he punisheth, are not believed. The report concerning Christ, another world, heaven and hell, sinks not deep into the hearts of many. If these things were truly believed, it is not possible that men could be so easy in a way of sin.

4. Want of consideration, Luke xv. 17. People dream away their lifetime; and however deep they can enter into the consideration of other things, they have no power to consider their souls state and case: *Jf. xlii. 20. He feedeth of ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Self-examination is utterly neglected; so there is no due reflection made on their souls state, and the course of life they are leading: *Jf. b. 3. The ox knoweth his owner,*
and

and the ass his master's crib : but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

5. The natural enmity of the heart prevailing against conviction : *Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Hence is rebelling against the light, keeping the truth prisoner in the head, that it may not get into the conversation to rule there, *Rom. i. 18.* There are notions of truth that force their own way into the mind, especially under a clear gospel-ministry : the natural enmity yoking with these, fights against them ; and getting over them, runs with a stronger current than otherwise, *Rom. vii. 12.*

6. *Lastly,* Unmortified lusts still keeping the rule and dominion over the soul, though Christ has the name of their Lord. Many call Christ Master, who are still servants to sin, serving diverse lusts and pleasures. Hence these hurry them into sinful courses, that they must do what their impetuous lusts drive them to, and cannot do the things that Christ says.

USE 1. of Information. Hence we may see,

1. That ungodly sinners under the dropping of the gospel, are self-condemned, and will be condemned out of their own mouths. They own Christ's authority over them, which Jews and Pagans do not ; and yet they regard it not in their walk, *Mal. i. 6.*

2. They are unreasonable and foolish in their expectation of benefit from Christ, and shall be disappointed : *Matth. vii. 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven : but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* O how can ye expect salvation from Christ, who have no regard to what he says ! Ye will not do his will to honour him, but dishonour him by trampling on his commands ! will not be saved from sin.

3. A profession of subjection to Christ, and bearing the external badges of it, is common to many of the devil's goats with Christ's sheep. No body needs value themselves upon it ; for though we say well for Christ as our Lord, yet if we do not accordingly, we but deceive ourselves.

4. *Lastly,* No man has reason to be stumbled at religion itself, because of the unsuitable lives of some professors of it. Many such stumbling-blocks are laid down this day in the way of the blind world ; they that lay them shall bear their judgment : but why should it be improven against the

truths

truths or practice of religion itself, since our Lord plainly forewarns that it will be so?

USE 2. of *Exhortation*. Ye do all call Christ your Lord, profess Christianity, have been baptized in his name, &c. Consider calmly and seriously, how your life answers your profession, whether ye do what he says or not, what regard ye shew to his commands in your practice. Consider,

1. It is expected that they who own Christ for their Lord, should carry themselves as his subjects and servants, that his will should be their law, his commands the rule of their life. To call him Lord, and yet cast his laws behind your backs, is to mock him, with those, *Matth. xxvii. 29. 30. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.*

2. If he is your Lord, as he has power and authority to command you, so he has power to revenge your disobedience, and to reward your obedience. His obedient children may be sure their labour shall not be in vain, *1 Cor. xv. ult.*; and the disobedient will find the weight of his hand, that will grind them to powder, *2 Thess. i. 7, 8.*

3. As he is a Lord, he is Lord and Saviour, Lord Redeemer. And what is it that he redeems from, and saves from? Is it not sin? *Tit. ii. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* *Matth. i. 21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.* He gave his life for that end, *Eph. v. 25. 26.* What horrid injury must it then be, to pretend he is your Lord, to save you, and yet ye will live in your sin, directly contrary to what his precious blood was shed for?

4. Lastly, Though we are not saved by our doing, but by believing; yet faith and holiness are inseparable: *James ii. 14. What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?* Where there is not holiness of heart and life, there is no true faith in Christ there. Faith, if it be true, unites the soul to Christ, works by love, purifies the heart, carries the soul heavenward in its conversation. Doing in perfection what Christ says, is reached by no believers here; but doing in sincerity, is what differences them still from unbelievers.

Consider

Consider well then what regard ye show to what Christ says. And let your consciences answer these questions.

1. Can ye say before the Lord, appealing to his omniscience, that ye have renounced your own will, lusts, and inclinations, to follow whatsoever the Lord discovers to be his will for you to do; and ye sincerely endeavour to stick by that renunciation, to conform yourselves to his will? *Acts ix. 6.* I doubt most of us have never been brought that length yet; and that many who have said it at some times, have resiled from it, and follow their own will more than Christ's to this day.

2. Do ye really so far comply with whatsoever God has discovered to be your duty, that ye dare not neglect it, but must endeavour it? *Psal. cxix. 6.* Can you think ye show an upright regard to the Lord's commands, when there are some of them that you can cast behind your back? No; if you regard them not all, ye regard none of them as ye ought. Say not, There is none can do all. It is true, none can do all perfectly; but there is no upright man, but he will put hand to all that he knows to be his duty, and do his endeavour in every one of them.

3. Do ye sincerely set yourselves to oppose and fight against every thing the Lord discovers to be sin, and are ye longing to have the victory over it? *Rom. vii. 24.* Are there not some sins that are your bosom-idols, which ye cannot be brought to part with? Are there not such sins with many who indulge themselves in sins, of the vileness of which none can be ignorant, that are not given up to a reprobate sense, as lying, filthiness, dishonest dealing, &c.?

4. Do ye really lie open to discoveries of sin and duty from the Lord's word? *Job xxxiv. 31. 32.* An upright servant desires to know his master's will; but the refractory and rebellious servant, having no mind to do it, cares not for knowing it, *Job xxi. 14.* Do ye read the Bible, or care for hearing it read, and attend to it as that from whence ye are to learn your duty? When ye do read or hear the word, do ye embrace it as the rule you are to regulate your practice by?

5. What weight has Christ's saying a thing with you, when a multitude of the world says against it? The world says there is no ill in many things, that the Bible says there is much ill in. It says, there is no harm, where the word says there is. In a word, the Bible says, the way to heaven is the way of strictness or straitness; the world says, there

there is no need of that strictness of life. Now, when the world's opinion carries it in your practice against Christ's decision in his word, do ye do the things which Christ says?

6. Do ye, in every part of your life and conversation, endeavour to approve yourselves to Christ as your Lord? *1 Pet. i. 15. As he which hath called you is holy, so are ye holy in all manner of conversation?* Do ye look on him as the party with whom ye have to do in all; not only in your religious duties, but in the common affairs of life, or worldly business? not only in your personal walk, but in the several relations wherein ye stand, as husbands, wives, children, and servants? *1 Cor. vii. 24. Alas! most men shuffle out any regard to Christ's commands, out of their worldly business, and their relations, confining their religion to their religious duties of praying, &c.*

7. Lastly, How do ye take any intimations of the Lord Christ's will made to you, to discover your duty or your sin in particular cases? Have they a silencing weight with your consciences, or do they but irritate your passions? *Is. xi. 6. So the Psalmist shewed his regard, Psal. cxli. 3. Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.* Those that cannot bear an admonition, reproof, or to be told of a fault, but presently are up in their own defence to ward off conviction, shew they have more regard to their credit, than their conscience, the authority of Christ the Lord, and any thing he says, *Hos. iv. 4.*

Doct. II. It lies on mens consciences before the Lord, to take it home to themselves, to consider and answer it, how they come to call Christ their Lord, and yet not make conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall only shew the import of the expostulation in the text, and then conclude with a word of application.

I. I will shew the import of this expostulation. It imports,

1. That Christ is in earnest for our obedience. He is not indifferent what regard we shew to what he says as our Lord: *Psal. cxix. 4. He hath commanded us to keep his precepts diligently.* He is a jealous Lord, and will not endure your baulking of any of his commands: *Exod. xxiii.*

ex. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. Though we are not to lay the weight of our acceptance with God on our obedience, yet there is a weight of evidence lies on it. And,

1st, The evidence of our belonging to Christ, in a saving relation, lies upon it: *John xv. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* If ye do not what he says, he will disown you as none of his, *Luke xiii. 27.* pretend what ye will. Christ sets his seal on all that belong to him, as soon as they become his; whereby they may be distinguished from the world lying in wickedness, *2 Tim. ii. 19. The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* If ye want that seal, he will reject you as none of his.

2^{dly}, The evidence of your right to heaven lies on it: *Rev. xxii. 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* And therefore, at the great day, the works of the saints, and of the wicked, are brought out before the world in judgment; the former as evidences of their title to heaven, the latter as grounds of the sentence of damnation. If ye baulk any of the least of his commands, ye thereby baulk your evidence for heaven, and so perish: *Matth. v. 19. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.*

2. It is possible for us in this life to get the things that Christ says, done acceptably, in all the parts thereof. If it were not so, then, by the text, no body at all would be allowed to call him Lord; which is certainly false: *Matth. vii. 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* So there are two sorts that call him Lord; some that do, some that do not what he says; the former allowed, the other rejected. The doctrine of the imperfection of the saints obedience, is a stone of stumbling to many a blind soul. To prevent your stumbling,

1st, Distinguish between doing the will of Christ in all its parts, and in all its degrees. The latter no man in this life can do at any rate; but in every part of his obedience he fails in some degree: *James iii. 2. For in many things we offend all.* But the former every true believer actually does!

Psal. cxix. 6. He has respect unto all God's commandments. A whole family hears so many particular pieces of work prescribed to them all by the father and master of the family. His grown children do them all exactly to his mind: the younger children, who are but learning to work, put hand to every one of them, and baulk none of the pieces; but they do none of them exactly. Refractory servants do some of them, but others of them they never notice. Just so it is with the saints in heaven, true believers on earth, and hypocrites.

Now, here lies the snare: None, say you, in this world can do all that is required of them, but they come short in many things: and so do but we. *Ans.* They come short of the degrees of every part, it is true; but if they are believers indeed, they do not come short of the parts themselves, as ye do. The whole parts of the will of God known to them, they do, and dare not but fall in with: and this will distinguish between them and you, that baulk any part of his will made known to you, as betwixt *David* and *Saul*, *Acts xiii. 22.* See *Col. iv. 12.*

2dly, Distinguish between doing the will of Christ perfectly, and acceptably. No man in this life can do the former, *Philip. iii. 12.* But every true believer does the latter, *Acts x. 35.* Ye that are masters know very well to make this distinction in your own work. If a child of yours, or a pliable servant, show a real good-will to obey your orders, you accept of their work, though it is not every way as ye would have it. So does the Lord: *2 Cor. viii. 12.* For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. But if a servant say, I cannot do it every way as he would have it done, and therefore I will let it alone altogether; how take ye that? And how will Christ take such treatment off your hand, in plain instances of duty which ye quite neglect, and of sin which ye indulge yourselves in?

Here is your snare: None do the will of Christ perfectly; and I do many things, though not all. *Ans.* Ay but true believers, though they do not do it perfectly, yet they do it so as God for Christ's sake accepts of their doing it: and that ye do not, and that ye are not careful about; but can be easy, whether he accept of it or not: And since ye are not universal in your obedience, ye are not sincere, nor are accepted in any thing.

3dly, Distinguish between ability in ourselves to do the will

will of Christ acceptably, and ability for it in Christ, offered to us in the gospel, and to be brought in by faith. No man, saint nor sinner, has the former: 2 Cor. iii. 5. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.* But all true believers do get the latter: Philip. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* You bid a servant do such a piece of work, and he neglecting it tells you, I wanted instruments for it: How take ye that? Will ye not say, Why did ye not come in and get the instruments for it? Did not my bidding you do it, suppose I allowed wherewith to do it?

Here is your snare: We can do nothing of ourselves, say ye: and thereupon the sluggard puts his hands in his bosom; and many a poor sinner lies down in his bed of ease and sloth, laying his head on this soft pillow, and sleeps full sound till the flames of hell awaken him. But that will not excuse you from doing the will of Christ; but it will bring you under a double guilt, one of not doing what he says, another of slighting his offered grace that might have enabled you: and so ye will be condemned, not because ye could not, but because you would not do the things he said.

In the covenant of works perfect obedience only could be accepted, and there was strength for it allowed to Adam in that covenant, which he lost. In the covenant of grace sincere obedience, though imperfect, may be accepted; and there is strength allowed in this covenant for it, whereby every piece of obedience that he requires may be done, though not as it should be, yet so as it may be accepted: 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.* xii. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* Philip. iv. 13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Only this strength is lodged in Christ, and must be fetched in by believing the promises, Psal. xxviii. 7. Jer. xvii. 7. 8. Now, the commands of Christ to sinners that hear the gospel, import an allowance of sufficient grace and strength for them thus to be fetched in: 2 Tim. ii. 1. *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* Exod. xx. 2. &c. *I am the Lord thy God, &c. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* The little noticing of this weakens believers in their obedience, and the total neglect of it by others ruins them.

3. Notwithstanding the things that Christ says may be got

done acceptably, yet many that call him Lord will not do them : *Tit. i. 16. They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny him, &c.* He has made his yoke easy, but yet they will not let it come on their fair necks : they say, as *Luke xix. 14. We will not have this man to reign over us.* The devil and their lusts get leave to ride them, but they will not be led by Christ. They say, they cannot help it ; but the truth is, they will not help it, for they will have none of his help for it ; as the Lord complains the *Israelites* did, *Psal. lxxxii. 11. My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* So their ruin is lodged upon a twofold score.

1st, Obedience to sin, and disobedience to Christ, is their choice. The way of life and death are set before them, and they chuse the latter : *Prov. viii. 36. He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul ; all they that hate me, love death.* *Ezek. xviii. 31. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?* Christ calls them to a holy, serious, humble, modest, and pious life. That they cannot endure ; but cost what it will, they must have a light, proud, unclean, sensual, and loose life, wherein they may think, talk, and carry themselves at liberty from the strictness of a holy walk, and tender conscience.

2^{dly}, They have neither heart nor use for the grace and strength that is in Christ Jesus, *John v. 40. Psal. lxxxii. 11.* And therefore they can live without him, *John vi. 67. 68.* They may have use for it, that really desire to have their lusts mortified, temptations resisted, their hearts and lives truly sanctified : but that is not their case. How then can they have a heart for it ? What heart can they have for cleansing and purifying things, that love rather to be wallowing in the mire ? Therefore the opened fountain of Christ's blood and Spirit is neglected. For as the Lord saith, *Jer. xlii. 27. I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields : woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean ? when shall it once be ?*

4. Christ is highly displeased with the disobedience of those that call him Lord, who will not do what he says, *Psal. l. 16.—22. Men will not believe this : they think little of their neglect of what he says, and they think that he looks on it as they do. He is their Saviour ; but they consider*

consider not, that he is, and will be their Judge. But to persuade you of it, consider,

1st, His infinite purity and holiness, *Is. vi. 3.* He is the holy One of *Israel*. He is of the self-same numerical essence or nature with the Father; all the attributes of God, and particularly his holiness, are in him, *Exod. xxiii. 21.* *Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.* Therefore whatever is said in scripture of the holiness of God, belongs to him. And his willingness to receive sinners is, not to save them in their sins, but to cleanse them from them.

2^{dly}, The dreadful strokes he has brought on such as called him Lord, for not doing the things that he says. He has in all ages of the church set up some monuments of this his displeasure. Whence came the fire that devoured *Nadab* and *Abihu*; came it not from before the Lord? *Lev. x. 1. 2.* and was not that the Lord Christ? *Acts vii. 38.* Who struck *Ananias* and *Sapphira* dead for lying unto God? *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, *Uzzah*, &c.? was it not Christ? *John v. 22.* *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*

3^{dly}, Does he not refuse communion with such persons in holy ordinances, and thereby testify his displeasure against them? *Hos. v. 15.* *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face.* What will it avail to attend ordinances, to come to a communion-table, while we continue in such a case? There can be no communion with Christ, *Psal. xxiv. 3. 4.* *Is. i. 15. 16.* Even particular pieces of unrepented-of guilt and untenderness, may be a controversy on which he will refuse communion with those that are habitually holy: *Psal. lxvi. 18.* *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* What then can others expect? *Amos iii. 3.* *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

Lastly, Consider how he will treat them at the last day: *Luke xix. 27.* *Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.* He is the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world; but he will be as a lion to them that will not do what he says, when he cometh in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of

of his power, 2 Thess. i. 8. 9. In vain will they then call him Lord, and plead their eating and drinking in his presence, Luke xiii. 25. 26. 27.

5. There is a great ill in calling Christ Lord, and not doing what he says; an ill that highly provokes him, as casting dishonour on him in a very special manner. There is something in it, that, so to speak, touches to the quick, beyond the dishonour done to him by others: Rev. iii. 15.

16. *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

1st, Their sins and looseness of life reflect a peculiar dishonour on him, as pretending a relation to him: Rom. ii. 24. *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you.* How do ye think yourselves touched and affronted with the miscarriages of your children and servants? Learn from that, how Christ takes with your sins and looseness of life. They are a blaspheming of his name and doctrine, calling him, in effect, the minister of sin, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Tit. ii. 4. 5. It is not in the power of open enemies to reach him such a blow.

2dly, They do Satan a peculiar pleasure. If there is any of the dust that is the serpent's meat, that relishes better with him than the rest, it is the sins and miscarriages of those that call Christ Lord: that is a feast for him; he will do more for it than for other ten, Job i. 7. 8. As there is joy in heaven at a sinner's repentance, there is a joy in hell among the devil and his angels at the falls of those that call Christ Lord. The enemy takes a peculiar pleasure and pride, in having not only his own professed servants, but others in Christ's livery following and serving him. In that, he can vie with Christ for a good master before the blind world, when he can shew them so many at his back, that sometimes gave their names to Christ.

3dly, They wound the heart of the real children of God, and make the whole family sigh more heavily, than the sins of others would do, Psal. lv. 12. Where the sins of open enemies do but scratch like a pin, theirs will pierce like a sword, Cant. i. 6. It covers them with shame, fills them with sorrow and indignation, and makes them weary of their post; as it did the Prophet, Jer. ix. 2. *Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers,*

adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. What wonder then, that Christ the master of the family resent it dreadfully?

6. * Christ will disown them for his servants, that in their practice disown him for their Lord, not doing what he says. They count the duty of servants grievous to them, and therefore he will divest them of the honour and privilege of his servants. They secretly loath him and his service, however fair they carry it, calling him Lord; and he will let all the world see that his soul loaths them, Rev. iii. 16. *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* And this he doth two ways.

1st, Spuing them out of his mouth unto the earth; whereas before they were exalted unto heaven, in respect of hopefulness of their souls safe, and of external church-privileges. In scripture-style, the church is called *heaven*, professors *the sons of God*: the devil's kingdom, or the world lying in wickedness, is called *the earth, the children of men*, Gen. vi. 2. and xi. 1. Rev. xii. 4. The gospel is Christ's call to sinners to come out of the world lying in wickedness, and be separate from them, joining themselves to the church, the family of God. Many profess to come away, and join so, and solemnly declare it by partaking of the Lord's table: but though they so call him Lord, they do not the things that he says. And our jealous Lord being provoked with it, spues them out, and in the sight of the world throws them back unto the earth they said they came from; and there they lie again amidst the world lying in wickedness.

Three things concur in this awful dispensation.

(1.) They are let fall into the mire of some gross pollution of the outward man: 2 Pet. ii. 22. *It is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Cain turns a murderer, Judas a betrayer of his master, Ananias and Sapphira liars, Demas a lover of the world, Jezebel and her children in Thyatira fall into adultery and fornication, &c. Rev. ii. 20. 21. 22. 23. (2.) Their leaf of appearance in religion falls. Though they get space, they get no grace to repent and re-

* The author, after recapitulating what he had delivered on the second doctrine, delivered what follows to the end of this discourse on a fast-day before the communion at *Etterick, August 14. 1728.*

cover, *Rev. ii. 21*; but they are from that time blasted, wither, and fade away: *John xv. 6*, *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* And they turn just the hue of the rest of the world lying in wickedness; spiritual death is painted in their faces; whereof this generation affords many frightful instances: *Luke viii. 18*, *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have,* (3.) Hence they lose their new name, and get their old one back again. What credit or reputation they had for religion and seriousness, is blown up. Their name sinks in that case among the serious godly, and they look upon them as none of theirs: *Is. lxv. 15*, *And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.* This is an awful case, *Zech. xi. 8*, *Three shepherds also I cut off in one month, and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.*

2dly, Spuing them out of his mouth into the pit, at the last day: *Luke xiii. 27. 28*, *He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.* In vain will they then cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us: Matth. xxv. 11. 12*, *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* In vain will they plead their eating and drinking in his presence. They called him Lord; but they walked with the workers of iniquity, and they will be led forth with them: *Psal. cxxv. 5*, *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* They will see that he will count it inconsistent with his honour to own them: *Mark viii. 38*, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* They got their names inrolled in the visible church, among his servants; but he will blot them out publicly: *Exod. xxxii. 33*, *And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.* Compared with *Rev. iii. 5*, *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and*

I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

7. Men are ruined in this way, because they do not consider it. It is want of consideration that leaves them at ease, calling Christ Lord, and yet not doing what he says : *If. xlv. 20. He feedeth of ashes : a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lye in my right hand?* They are out of their place, like a wandering bird, *Prov. xxvii. 8.* ; and they are easy in it, because they are out of themselves, out of their wits, like the prodigal, *Luke xv. 17.* They consider not the matter.

1st, They call Christ Lord, and so bribe and soothe their blind and sleepy consciences. If they should give up with all pretensions to Christ and religion, they could have no peace with their consciences : therefore they will attend ordinances ; hear the word, though they will not do it ; pray in secret or in their families, though perhaps out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing ; they will partake of the Lord's table, though they will not give up with the table of devils. These things flatter their consciences to be easy ; as was the case with *Micah, Judg. xvii. 13.* *Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.*

2^{dly}, They do not the things that he says however, and so satisfy their unmortified lusts. Thus they please both parties within them. Their saying fair pleases their conscience ; and their not doing what Christ says, pleases their lusts. They have no more ado with Christ, but to be called by his name. For the rest, they will eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, and will not make their religion burdensome to their lusts by mortification and tender walking ; and so they are easy on that side.

But there are three things they do not consider.

(1.) What inconsistency is in this course : *2 Cor. vi. 14. 15. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ?* It is made up of contradictions. Their profession condemns their practice as abominable ; and their practice condemns their profession as horrid juggling and dissembling with God. Ye pray for pardon of sin as a crime, and yet return to it with delight : that God would make you holy ; and yet ye will not part with your lusts, but have a horror of being bound up to a

holy walk : that God would at length receive you into heaven ; and yet if you were there even now in the temper ye are in, you would flee out of it as from a hell, because ye have not relish of either person or thing that is there, and for nothing but what is not there.

(2.) How hainously the Lord Christ takes it, that men should yoke Satan's service with his, 2 Cor. vi. 15. forecited. He looks on it as highly dishonourable to him, and after a sort more than if they should profess themselves none of his, Rev. iii. 16. forecited. That is an awful word of great indignation, Ezek. xx. 39. *As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me : but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.* It bears, that their duties are but a polluting of his name. Your praying, hearing, and communicating will not cleanse the abomination of a loose life : but looseness of conversation will defile all these, Hag. ii. 12. 13. 14.

(3.) What the end of such a course will be, what it will issue in at length : Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end !* It cannot misls of a fearful issue : Is. l. 11. *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* Psal. cxxv. 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.* See it in the parable of the foolish builder, the foolish virgins, the tares among the wheat, the man at the marriage-supper without the wedding-garment, &c. It is pity men should not consider timely.

8. *Lastly*, People ought to consider it, see what account they can make of it, and how they will answer it. And,

1st, How they will answer it to their own consciences. Conscience may be asleep now, but it will certainly awaken : and the longer it be in awakening, it will be the more severe when it is roused, as in the case of Belsazzar and Felix. Ye cannot evite a reckoning with your conscience. As silent as it is, ye will find it has noted your ways in its book : Prov. xx. 27. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* And if conscience condemn you as hypocritical pretenders to Christ, what will come of you ? 1 John iii. 20. *For if our heart*

condemn

condemn us; God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. And if ye die with an ill conscience, it will be a gnawing worm for ever.

2dly, How they will answer it to the Lord Christ in the judgment. There will be a day of judgment, wherein the tribunal will be set, the books opened, and mens whole lives will be called over: Eccl. xii. 14. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. And every one will be judged according to his works: 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Then mens calling Christ Lord, will be tried by their doing or not doing the things that he says. And what will men then say to the question in the text, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?* and to that question, *How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?*

II. I come now to a word of Application.

First, Let me examine into this matter, and ask and put it to every one's conscience before the Lord, *Why call ye Christ Lord, and do not the things that he says?* You are rational creatures; ye will not allow that you are fools, that have no reason for what you do, or not do. Therefore produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob, II. xli. 21. What is your plea? Is it,

1. We are saved by faith, and not by good works? *Ans.* I have answered that already, that though the weight of our acceptance with God, lies not on good works, yet the weight of our evidence does. I add, that though we are not saved by, yet we are saved to, good works and obedience: Eph. ii. 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. 1 Pet. i. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, &c. So if you are not brought to do what Christ says, you are not saved. But perhaps you will insist, and say, O but we will be saved after death. *Ans.* If ye be not saved while ye are in life, ye will never be saved after death. The notion of salvation begun after death, is unknown to the Bible: Eph. ii. 8. For by grace are ye saved, through

faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* Tit. iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

2. We have no strength in ourselves. *Ans.* That also I have answered at large. If the law came to you with its commands without the gospel, there would be something in this, though not so much but the law would overthrow it; as in the case of pagans, Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.* But since the gospel comes with the law, telling you there is ability for it in Christ, which you may have by faith; your plea is rejected, and you are condemned, not only for not doing what Christ says, but for refusing strength to do it with.

3. We do several things, and there is no body but has their failings. *Ans.* Ye may do many things, as Herod, Mark vi. 20.; but if ye set not yourselves to do all the parts of Christ's will known to you, without reserve, ye do nothing: James ii. 10. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Sound believers fail of degrees, but not of the parts: Psal. cxix. 6. *David said, I have respect unto all thy commandments.* Acts xiii. 22. *I have found David the son of Jesse; a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

4. God is merciful, and Christ is our gracious Saviour; we trust he will not be severe on us for our sins. *Ans.* That is a trust in God and Christ, not upon his word, but over the belly of his word; so that either it must fail and disappoint you, or God's truth must fail: Heb. xii. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Psal. cxxv. 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. But his confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors,* Job xviii. 14. Is that the use ye have for the mercy of God? Psal. cxxx. 4. and for the grace of Christ? See the character of such, Jude 4. *There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace*

of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. What needs all that strictness of life in our case; we are neither ministers nor elders, to have any character of that sort to support? *Ans.* It is evident, that many take a liberty in sinful practices from this; practices which they would condemn in them, though they allow them in themselves. Ministers and elders untender and loose in their life and practice, shall bear their judgment, as betrayers of the cause of religion to an ungodly world. But it will be no comfort to you to go to hell with unholy ministers and elders. And therefore ye must either take the strait way with godly and tender ministers and elders to heaven; or else, in the first place, find out in your Bible, where the strait way to heaven is only for ministers and elders, but there is a wide way to it for others. Ye must seek another bible for it; for this mentions but one strait way to heaven, for you and them both: *Matth. vii. 13. 14. Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* But if ye belong to Christ, ye bear a character as venerable as that of a minister; ye are priests, *1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. Heb. xii. 23.* If ye say, Ye are not so much as professors: *Ans.* Are ye Christians or not? If ye be, let yourselves to answer that profession, and no more is required of you; or else why do ye profess so much?

6. *Lastly,* But we hope to repent, reform, and find mercy ere we die. *Ans.* When? The young when they grow old, and the old when they come to a deathbed. And who has secured you that ye shall see another day? Not God, I am sure: *Heb. iii. 7. The Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice.* And if ye should be old, and get a deathbed to lie in a while, how know ye that ye will get grace to repent? Truly it is not God's ordinary way: *Job xx. 11. His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.*

Secondly, Let me expostulate this matter with you, how ye come to call Christ Lord, and do not the things that he says.

1. Do ye think that religion is just a matter of form and fair shew, to say prayers, and come to the kirk on the sabbath, &c. not carrying it through the whole of your walk?

If

The inseparable Connection between a Sinner's
having Part with Christ, and being washed by
him:

O R,
The Mystery of Sanctification by Christ, open-
ed up.

Several SERMONS, preached at *Etterick*,
in the Year 1728.

N. B. The first Sermon was preached immediately before the Celebration
of the Lord's Supper, *August 18. 1728*; and the others on some subse-
quent Lord's days.

JOHN xiii. 8.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

THESE words are Christ's answer to *Peter* refusing to let Christ wash his feet. No doubt it was a kind of modesty, reverence, and humility, that put *Peter* on this peremptory refusal of Christ's astonishing kind offer. But all is not gold that glitters. There is much of this bastard humility in the world, whereby people refuse Christ's offers, and put them away from them, with a very good grace, and great respect to the Lord Christ, as they think. Christ comes to sinners in the gospel, and offers to wash them from their pollution: But will they offer a soul defiled soul to God almighty, the infinitely holy Saviour, to be washed by him? No; they think they know more of their own sinfulness and unworthiness, and of Christ's greatness and holiness, than that comes to. And so they affront him, under a pretence of honouring him.

There are three characters of this false humility.

1. It condemns the generation of the righteous, who came all to Christ, at his command, to be washed by him, receiving it with admiration of his condescension. The other disciples, no doubt, were struck with amazement at Christ's coming to wash their feet: but true humility took Christ's will for law and right, and makes them silently yield themselves to the Lord. But Peter's behaviour condemns them, as rude and disrespectful, vers. 5. 6. *After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*

2. It keeps Christ at a distance, and so proceeds not from faith, but unbelief, vers. 6. No doubt, when Christ stretched out his hand to wash Peter's feet, he drew them in quickly to him; and shewed by his deeds, as well as his words, that he had no mind that Christ's fair hand should come on them. So folk, under a sense of sinfulness, may flee from Christ, while he follows them.

3. It argues a heart not duly humbled; and so it is but accursed pride under the vail of a shew of humility. (1.) Carnal wisdom and reason has the ascendant, and will not bow to divine revelation: vers. 7. 8. *Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* Let the gospel of God's grace be delivered never so plain, they will not give over measuring divine mysteries by their carnal reason. (2.) Insensibleness and self-conceit prevails. Peter doubtless thought whether that his feet needed no washing, but that they might be borne with even in Christ's presence, as they were; or if they did, he would wash them himself. So he is very presumptuous in his refusal. And this lies at bottom of Peter's unhumility: either they think they are not so filthy, or that, if they may be borne with, or if they will wash themselves clean before they come to Christ, or if they will down in a moment from all their heights, and makes him not only content, but earnest to be washed all over by Christ, without pretending to wipe off one spot off himself by himself. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* vers. 9. *Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* This word strikes Peter to the heart, If

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Q. d. "Peter, no washing by me, no part with me to salvation. Washing by me, and part with me, you nor no man shall ever be able to separate in your cases. Have the one, have the other; want the one, and upon Heaven's truth you want the other."

I think it is an insipid question here, Why so severe a threatening for refusing so small a thing? For Christ says not, "If I wash not thy feet, thou shalt have no part with me," but simply, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," in the present time. Neither could it be drawn to the washing of the feet, if the questionists did not first suppose a change of the sense the Holy Ghost useth, which is not at least without necessity to be admitted. *Gr. If I washed thee not, or, if I have not washed thee, thou hast no part with me.* Q. d. "Peter, if you belong to me, I have done more for you, than to wash your feet with water; I have washed you with my blood: if you have taken that vastly costlier washing off my hands, why refuse you this? If I have not so washed you, you have no part with me; for none have part with me, but those whom I so wash."

The words then bear an inseparable connection betwixt two things in the case of sinners, standing and falling together. (1.) The washing of them by Christ, to wit, from their sins, *Rev. i. 5.* (2.) Their having part with him, partaking of his saving benefits, being joint heirs of heaven with him. Compare *Deut. xiv. 27.* *And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.* The scripture knows no part sinners can have of salvation or of heaven, but with Christ; *Acts iv. 12.* *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* They that miss their part with Christ, there is but another side where their part will fall: *Rev. xxi. 8.* *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Now, if a sinner either be not washed at all, or be washed only with the nitre and soap of his own faithless endeavours and reformation; if he be not washed by Christ, he has no part with him, he is none of his; he is in a state

of death and destruction, lying ready to be cast out as an abominable thing, into the unclean place, the stinking lake.

The relation betwixt these two, is, the former is a necessary consequent of the latter; and therefore is held forth as a necessary evidence of it. All that have saving part with Christ, are washed by him: therefore if Christ hath not washed thee, thou hast no saving part with him.

The doctrine deducible from the words is as follows.

DOCT. *A sinner's having any saving part with Christ, and his being washed by Christ from his sin, are simply and absolutely inseparable.*

In discoursing from this doctrine shortly at the time, I shall

I. Consider a sinner's having part with Christ.

II. His being washed by Christ.

III. The inseparableness of the two.

IV. Improve the doctrine.

I. The first thing to be spoken to, is, *A sinner's having part with Christ.* And this we take up in two things.

1. His being of Christ's mystical body, through union with him: 1 Cor. xii. 12. 13. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* There are but two general corporations of mankind on earth, heaven, and hell: the corporation of the first and fallen Adam, who has diffused all manner of pollution and defilement over those that are his, not to be washed off by human art; and of this society we are all by nature members: the corporation of the Second Adam, Christ, who cleanses and purifies all that are his, from that pollution and defilement; for the latter is raised out of the former. See the two, 1 John v. 19. *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* 2 Cor. vi. 17. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* Now, if ye are not washed by Christ, ye belong not to the Second Adam's corporation; ye belong not to Christ.

2. The sinner's having communion with Christ in his saving benefits, partaking of them in fellowship with him:

1. *John i. 3. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* All salvation is in Christ; so that they who have part with him, are complete in him, *Col. ii. 9. 10.* And salvation is in him exclusively to all other, *Acts iv. 12.* Now, if ye are not washed by Christ, ye have no communion with him in his saving benefits, no part in his salvation, and so none in salvation at all. Christ has a righteousness fully answering the law's demands; it is so broad a white raiment, that it covers all his people, partaking with him in it, *Rom. iii. 22.* But if he wash you not, ye have no part in it. He has taken out a new right to God, as his God, and all his people partake with him in it: *Rom. viii. 17.* And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. *John xx. 17. I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.* But if Christ wash you not, ye have no part, he is not your God.

II. The next thing to be spoke to, is, *The sinner's being washed by Christ.* This is inseparable from his having part with Christ, and is the privilege of all, and only those who have part with him. Concerning this washing I offer these particulars.

1. There is a filthiness in sin, whereby the soul is polluted and defiled before the Lord. This is supposed in the washing from it: *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* Sin does not only make the sinner guilty, but filthy and abominable. It is the abominable thing that God hates, *Jer. xlv. 4. filth itself, Is. iv. 4.* This filthiness of sin lies in its contrariety to the holiness of God expressed in his law. Holiness is the glory of God, and the beauty of the soul, *Exod. xv. 11.*; sin the deformity and filthiness of it. Hence,

1st, It makes the sinner loathsome before God, that he cannot look on him, but with abhorrence; and with such abhorrence as one looks upon a thing he has a natural antipathy at, *Zech. xi. 8. My soul loathed them.* *Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.* *Psal. v. 4. For thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

2^{dly}, It fills the soul with shame before God. I mean not that holy shame that proceeds from a joint view of sin

loathsomeness

loathsomeness, and God's pardoning grace in Christ; that is a fruit of the Spirit, *Ezek. xvi. 60. 61. I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed.* But I mean a natural shame, whereby the sinner, obliged to fix his eyes on God's holiness, and seeing his own unlikeness to him, his countenance falls, he is damped, and filled with dread and horror, and therefore labours to make away out of his presence; as *Adam* did, *Gen. iii. 10. I heard thy voice (said he to the Lord) in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* Now, unwashed sinners are filthy all over. T

(1.) Their nature is filthy, *Psal. xiv. 3. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doth good, no not one.* Sin has spread its defilement over all the faculties of their souls, and over all the members of their bodies: *Tit. i. 15. Unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* Their very bodies, however perfumed and adorned, are filthy before God with spiritual filth cleaving to them, *Heb. x. 22.*

(2.) Their life and conversation is filthy, *2 Pet. ii. 7.* Their daily walk is a heaping new filth upon their already filthy souls. Their habitual filthiness produces still actual filthiness, as the poisoned spring sends forth poisonous streams, *Psal. xiv. 1.*

3. Christ has them all to wash who get part in him. Hence the redeemed church sings praises to him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, *Rev. i. 5.* They come to him in their pollution, and are washed by him; they come to him defiled all over, in the defilement of their nature, and of their life, that they may be washed; and coming to him by faith, it is done, *Ezek. xvi. 8. 9. Rom. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17.* How can it be otherwise? for they cannot wash themselves before they come. Is it possible for people to wash, before they come to the waters? or to bathe before they come into the laver?

4. All those who take part in him by faith, he washes with his blood from their sin, *Heb. xii. 24. Rev. i. 5.* He offered himself a sacrifice to God for sin, and the blood of the slain sacrifice is sprinkled on the sinners in him, for their cleansing: *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* The stain of sin was so deep, that nothing else could wash it out: and had he not provided the laver of his own blood, *Abraham, Paul, and all the saints*
now

now in glory, since they were once filthy, would have been filthy still, with Cain, Judas, and other filthy vessels of wrath.

There are two things in his blood, that make it to wash out this stain, as deep as it is.

1st, An infinite value and dignity; for it is the blood of an infinite person, the blood of God, *Acts. xx. 28.* the Son of God; *1 John i. 7.* the Father's equal, the Most High.

2^{dy}, An infinite efficacy, power, and energy; for the Spirit is in it, the infinite Spirit of holiness, *John vi. 53.* with 63. The blood was given for atonement, because the life of the flesh, or the animal spirits, are in the blood, *Lev. xvii. 11.* And therefore it was to be sprinkled while it was yet warm with the spirits in it. Now, Christ's blood is always warm and fresh, with the spirits of life and holiness in it, *Heb. x. 20. Rev. iii. 1.*

4. There is a twofold washing by the blood of Christ; one that makes clean in the eye of the law, leaving not the least mark of a spot on the soul; peculiar to the saints in heaven, *Heb. xii. 23.* Another, making clean in the eye of the gospel, though not absolutely: *John xv. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Cant. iv. 7. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.* It is this last our text means only. Only observe, that they are not different kinds, but different degrees of the same washing by Christ's blood. It is the same laver of Christ's blood, that we are washed in before death to fit us for communion with God here, and that same laver that we are washed in at death, to fit us for communion with God in heaven. Only that efficacy of Christ's blood now exerted on us in part, is put forth on us in full measure to the utter abolition of sin, *Eph. v. 25. 26. 27. Rev. vii. 14. 15.*

5. As washing is properly the purging away of filthiness, spots, and stains from the object washed; so the washing from sin is formally and directly the sanctification of the sinner, *Eph. v. 26. Tit. iii. 5.* So if Christ sanctify us not, we have no part in him. Howbeit, it supposes or implies more than that wherein it formally consists.

In all washing there are two things to be distinguished: the loosing of the filth sticking to the object; for if it do not stick, it cannot defile: and the removing of it being once loosed, which is the washing properly. Accordingly in washing a soul from sin, there are two things.

1st, The loosing of the filth of sin sticking to the soul. Sin sticks to our souls, as pitch or tar to a man's fingers: and

and there is no removing of it, till once it be loosed by an application of Christ's blood. Now, it is by guilt that it sticks to our soul, 1 Cor. xv. 56. And that is done away in our justification; which must needs go before our sanctification, as the loosing of sticking filth, before the washing it away; as the Holy Ghost teacheth, Rom. vii. 6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherewith we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Hence the Apostle saith of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

2dly, The removing and purging away the filth of sin being once loosed: and the same blood that looses it, purgeth it away in sanctification, as the same water that looseth the filth, carries it away off the cloth; and so the pardoned sinner is made holy: Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Rev. vii. 14. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And this purging away of the filth of sin off the sinner, lies in three things.

(1.) The putting away of his former leanness before God. The blood of Christ having come over the soul, it is now washed; and God can look on it with complacency, Rev. i. 5. 6. He calls her beloved, that was not beloved.

(2.) Making of the soul fair and clean before the Lord: Cant. iv. 7. Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee. The Spirit in the blood leaves his own image on the soul, and carries it all over the man, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Tit. i. 14. Life, eternal life, is in that blood, and where-ever it comes; and it goes over the whole man, seeds of life are left in the soul that shall never die out. The Spirit in the blood takes of the fulness of grace in Christ, and communicates to them grace for grace, John i. 16. so transforming them into his image.

(3.) Removing the legal shame out of the soul before God, and causing it with child-like kindly blushes to come before him, and press near him, crying Abba, Father, with the boldness of faith in greater or lesser measure, Rom. viii. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby

we cry, *Abba, Father.* *Ezra ix. 6.* O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

6. Faith is the instrumental cause of this washing. Hence the Apostle, *Acts xv. 9.* speaks of purifying the heart by faith. It lays hold upon, and applies the blood of Christ. *Rom. iii. 25.* Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.

7. Lastly, Afflictions are the occasional causes of this washing. *Is. xxvii. 9.* By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.

III. The next thing to be considered, is the inseparableness of the two. They are so,

1. In respect of their subject, which is necessarily one. He that has the one, has the other; and no man can have either of them singly. If thou hast part in Christ, thou art washed by him; if thou art washed by him, thou hast part with him.

2. In respect of time. That moment one gets part with Christ, he washes him from his sins. In order of nature indeed, part with Christ goes before washing, and justification before sanctification. But in respect of time they come together and at once. That they are so inseparable, appears,

1st, From the end and design of Christ's death, which cannot be frustrated. He died for that end, that sinners taking part with him by faith, might be washed by him from their sins, *Eph. v. 25. Eccl. Tit. ii. 14.*

2^{dly}, From the nature of the thing. There is a lively efficacy in Christ's blood to wash away sin: so that the soul come to Christ, and having part in him, must needs be washed; or that precious blood must be counted as dead water, that has lost its virtue, *Heb. ix. 20.* Can a soul garment be laid in a pure running stream, and the washing of it not be begun the moment that it is laid in? And can an unholy soul be united by faith to Christ, and the washing of it not begun that moment by virtue from his blood?

USE I. of *Trial.* Ye may hereby know whether ye have any part with Christ or not, and consequently whether ye have a right to the Lord's table or not. Are ye washed by

Christ

Christ from your sins, or no? If ye are unsanctified, unholy souls, yet living in the filth of your sins, I declare ye have no part with Christ; since where there is no true holiness, there is no true faith.

Quest. How may I know that I am washed by Christ?

Mark 1. If ye are washed by Christ, though ye are not washed perfectly, ye are washed universally; washed in every part, though not perfectly clean in any part: *2 Cor. v. 17.* *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.* Ye are washed from the gross pollutions of the outward man, from the reigning pollutions of the inner man: *Psal. xxiv. 3. 4.* *Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.* There is a new set in you for purity, darting to all the points of the Christian compass, though you fall short of degrees in every point. That compass ye find, *1 John iii. 3.* *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

2. Ye lay the stress of your acceptance with God, not upon your inherent cleanness, the effect of your washing; but on the blood of Christ, the cause of it: *Philip. iii. 3.* *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Close hypocrites never fail to split on this rock. That, *Matth. v. 3.* *Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,* is set first, for it must be carried through all; and *vers. 8.* *Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.*

3. Your hearts are loosed from sin, though it cleaves to you. It lies not like mud in a pool, where there is nothing to wear it out; but like mud in a spring, where the spring-water tends to work it out. So ye will be groaning under the remains of your uncleanness, saying, with the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 24.* *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* You will be content to see every spot, *Psal. cxxxix. 23. 24.* that it may be washed off; and really desirous to be made perfectly clean; as was the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 13. 14.* *I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

USE 2. of *Instruction* and *Direction* to unwashed souls, yet lying in their blood. Sinners, will ye be made clean?

For *Motive*: To be left lying in the filth of sin, is formally one half of the punishment of the damned, and virtually the whole of it. See the form of Christ's giving up with a sinner, and dropping him for ever, *Rev. xxii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.* There is the punishment of loss. And in that filth will be bred and fed the worm that never dies; out of it will arise the fire that is never quenched. And that is the punishment of sense.

Now, the *Direction* is, If ye would be washed by Christ, get part with Christ. Say not, Will ever I get part with Christ being so unclean, not purified and meet for him? But no uncleanness of yours can hinder your getting part with Christ, if you will but take it. See the case of the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* And ye shall rot and pine away in your filth, wash otherwise as well as ye will, if ye will not take it: *Psal. lxxxi. 11. 12. But my people would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust: and they walked in their own counsels.*

Quest. What access have I to get part with Christ? *Ans.* Christ and his salvation are a common good: *1 John iv. 14. We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Jude vers. 3. this salvation is called the common salvation.* I proclaim to every one to come and take their part with Christ, assuring them of welcome: *Rev. xxii. 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

Quest. How may I be possessed of part with Christ? *Ans.* By faith, crediting the promise of the gospel, and accordingly trusting on Christ as your Saviour, for his whole salvation; for salvation from sin, as well as from wrath; for that holiness and purity of heart and life, which are absolutely necessary to make you meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, as well as for that righteousness by which you can only be accepted in the sight of God, and by which alone you can have a sure and indefeasible title to heaven and glory.

Lastly,

Lastly, Let the faints consider, that the more part they have with Christ, the more they will be washed; and that faith is the only way to have part with Christ in all his saving benefits, and that it is a mean, of God's appointment, for washing and purification. Hence be exercising faith daily upon Christ, and particularly in the view of going to a communion-table, in order to your being washed and sanctified; remembering, that unless Christ wash you, you can have no part with him.

The Mystery of Sanctification by Christ.

Several SERMONS, preached at *Etterick*,
August 25. 1728, and subsequent Lord's days.

JOHN xiii. 8.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

I Entered on these words last Lord's day, on occasion of the sacramental solemnity which was then celebrated among us; observed a doctrine, proposed a method, which was briefly prosecuted, and I made some practical improvement of the subject. But as this text opens a large field of discourse, and contains ample matter for directing faith and practice, I shall now endeavour to prosecute the design of the words more fully, in a series of discourses. For this end I observe the following doctrine, viz.

DOCT. *Such an inseparable connection there is between a sinner's having part with Christ, and being washed from his sins by Christ in a work of sanctification, that if a sinner is not washed from his sins by Christ, he has no part with Christ, while he is so.*

Briefly, *If a sinner is not washed from his sins by Christ, he has no part with Christ.*

In handling this important subject, I shall consider,

I. What it is to be washed from our sins by Christ, viz. unto a cleanness in the eye of the gospel.

II. The unwashed or un sanctified sinner's having no part with Christ.

III. Conclude with some practical inferences.

I. I shall consider *what it is to be washed from our sins by Christ*, viz. *unto a cleanness in the eye of the gospel.* And upon this head, I shall shew,

I. What

1. What this washing supposeth.

2. Wherein it consists.

3. How it is done and brought about.

FIRST, I shall shew what our being washed from our sins by Christ supposeth.

1. It supposeth in the sinner, a conviction of the filthiness of sin, and his loathsomeness by it. Hence the church says, *Is. lxiv. 6. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* They that never saw the vileness and abominable nature of sin, are not washed from it: *Prov. xxx. 12. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.* The man cries not only, with the criminal, *Guilty, guilty*; but, with the leper, *Unclean, unclean.* Sin is not only frightful, but hateful and loathsome to him, as the vilest filth. Now, if ye have not been convinced of the filthiness of sin, ye have no part with Christ.

1st, This conviction is got by looking into the gls of the law, representing the spotless holiness of God: *Rom. vii. 12. 13. 14. The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.* The glaring beauty of God's holiness expressed in the law, striking the sinner, he sees himself filthy and loathsome before the holy God, as most unlike him.

2dly, It fixes an impression of shame on the sinner. He is ashamed of himself, of what he is, what he has done, and what he has neglected to do; as the publican did, *Luke xviii. 13. who standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* He is like a child, that having got a clean white frock on him, has fallen into the mire, and stands ashamed before his mother in that pickle.

2. It supposes a willingness to be made clean: *Psal. xix. 12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* It is not easy to bring a sinner that length: *Jer. xiii. 27. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* Sin is so woven into our nature, and so strengthened by custom in sin, which is a second nature, that it is harder to make a sinner willing

to

to be made clean, than to bring a swine away from the mire and dirt it loves to nestle and wallow in. But in the day of the washing of a sinner, he is made as willing to be washed, as ever child ashamed of his nastying himself, is. So if ye have not been made willing to be clean, ye have no part with Christ.

3. It supposes a conviction that we cannot wash ourselves clean, by any thing we can do or suffer: *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* What mars the washing by Christ with many, is, that they think they can wash themselves clean enough by themselves. They see not how fast the filth of sin sticks to them, and so they think their praying, confessing, reforming, and tears, will do it. But hear what *Job* says, chap. ix. 30. 31. *If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hand never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.* This every soul that is sanctified is brought to. Therefore if ye have not been convinced, that ye cannot wash yourselves clean, by any thing ye can do, ye have no part with Christ.

4. It supposes a hearty consent of the soul to be washed by Christ. Christ washes none against their will: *Jer. xiii. 27. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* They that will needs lie still in their filthiness, shall lie and rot in it for ever for him: *Rev. xxii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.* *Hos. iv. 17. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.* Christ makes all his elect willing to be holy, but he forces holiness on none. Therefore if ye have not given a hearty consent of your soul to be washed, ye have no part with Christ.

5. Lastly, It supposes a presenting of our defiled souls to Christ to be washed by him. This is the work of faith, by which the soul comes to the waters: *Is. lv. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* The soul comes to Christ, as the leper to the priest to be cleansed: *Psal. li. 7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* Compared with *Lev. xiv. 6. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them, and the living bird, in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.* It eyes him as a Saviour from the filth, as well

well as the guilt of sin; as a sanctifier of the unclean, as well as a justifier of the ungodly. Therefore, if ye have not presented your defiled souls to Christ, to be washed by him, ye have no part with Christ.

SECONDLY, I shall shew wherein our being washed from our sins by Christ consists. As washing in the general consists in removing of filthiness, and making clean; so does the washing of a soul by Christ, lie in removing the filth of sin from off the sinner, and making him clean in likeness to God. Now,

1. Christ washeth sinners in the inner man: *Psal. xlv. 13. The King's daughter is all glorious within.* Pharisaical washings reach the outer man only: but Christ's washing goes to the hidden man of the heart. *Adam* left us in the mire of sin, with a nature corrupt and filthy, the very reverse of the nature of God; all the faculties of our souls defiled, *Tit. i. 15.* But Christ washes our nature and faculties. And this lies in two things.

1st, Removing and washing off that filth of sin, that either clave to them from our birth, or has been added to them since: *Tit. iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* We came into the world with such corruption cleaving to our nature and faculties, as not only disabled us for all good, but made us prone to all evil, and averse to all good. This is strengthened and increased during the time one lives unregenerate. And the corruption of nature spreads itself, and takes many roots in the soul, in diverse particular lusts, *Rom. vi. 12.* Now, Christ washing of this filth off the soul,

(1.) Purgeth our whole nature and faculties, from that corruption, so far that it does not reign there: *Rom. vi. 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* The total blindness as to the receiving of the things of God, is purged out of the mind; that reigning aversion to good, out of the will; and the reigning carnality, out of the affections. The natural corrupt bent of the heart is taken away, removed, and broken; the stony heart is taken away, and a heart of flesh is given, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26.*

(2.) He purgeth the soul from its old lusts, loosing them at the root: *Gal. v. 24. They that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* As in the deluge of waters coming over the earth, trees deeply rooted were

were washed away by the roots, and lay floating here and there, and so might give some disturbance to the ark: so Christ's efficacious blood coming over the soul, looses old lusts by the roots, though they are not quite taken away, but give disturbance to the believer. They are in him as a broken tooth, they hang at him as a leg out of joint.

2dly, It lies in introducing the beauty of habitual holiness into our souls, in conforming us to the image of Christ: *Tit. iii. 5. forecited. 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* As the vessel of brass or silver, being overlaid with nastiness, has nothing of its primitive lustre; yet when it is washed and scoured, it recovers somewhat of its former brightness: so the unwashed sinner has lost all his primitive spiritual glory: but Christ washing him in the day of grace, he recovers it somewhat; and the washing being perfected in glory, he will be brighter and more glorious than ever. Now, Christ introducing this into our soul,

(1.) Implants in us a new nature, which goes over all the faculties of the soul. It is a *divine nature*, *2 Pet. i. 4.* as coming from God, and making the soul like God, *John iii. 6.—That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.* Hence the man is a new creature; all his faculties are renewed, mind, will, and conscience: *2 Cor. v. 17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.* This nature has a bent and propensity to good, and an aversion to evil, and cannot lose it as long as it is in being: and it will be ever, for it is an immortal nature. Hence the combat, *Gal. v. 17. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

(2.) This new nature hath in it the seeds of all saving graces: *1 John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* Compared with *Deut. xxx. 6. The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live.* We have a swatch of them, *Gal. v. 22. 23. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* And they are taken out of that ful-

ness

ness of grace that is in Christ the head, and communicated to the sinner as a member: *John i. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* And thus they bear the image of Christ, that as he was meek, lowly, &c. so are they in a measure. And hereby they are enabled for all acts of holy obedience, as a principle of life gives power for motion.

This is the washing of the sinner in the inner man: and if ye are not so washed by Christ, ye have no part with him!

2. Christ washeth sinners in the outward man too: *Psal. xlv. 13. The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.* These two go together, the latter issuing from the former: *Psal. xxiv. 3. 4. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.* *James iv. 8. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.* As the candle within shines through the lantern, so grace in the heart appears in the outward conversation: *Matth. vi. 22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* As the corruption of nature reigning, vents itself in abominable works, *Psal. xiv. 1.;* so the cleansing and purifying of our nature, vents itself in good works, *Tit. ii. 14. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. For as the tree is, so will the fruit be.*

Now, Christ washing sinners in the outward man,

1st, Removes the filth that before clave to their life and conversation, *Eph. iv. 22.* It is no more a vile conversation, nay, nor a vain conversation, *1 Pet. i. 18.;* not a disorderly, but a well-ordered conversation, *Psal. l. 23.* They that go back to their former conversation, whether in vanity or vileness, shew themselves but Satan's washed swine, not Christ's washed saints, *2 Pet. ii. 22.* It reaches,

(1.) Their words, and purifies them from corrupt communication. If the heart be circumcised, so will the lips be too: *James i. 26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* If grace rule in the heart, the tongue will not be allowed to go at random.

The liberty that some take with their tongues in obscenity,

lying, swearing, mocking and jesting at serious religion, &c. proclaims them to be unwashed by Christ. See *Psal. xv.*

(2.) It reaches the course of their actions, and purifies it: *Heb. ix. 14.* *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* It purifies their course from impiety against God, and injustice against man; teaching them to walk, as *Tit. ii. 12.* *soberly, righteously, and godly.* Their hands are washed, as well as their hearts; and their feet are washed, that they go not in the way of sinners as before.

2dly, He beautifies them in their life and conversation: *Cant. vii. 1.* *How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.* Compared with *Eph. vi. 15.* *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.* He makes them shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; and helps them to a conversation becoming the gospel. And this also reaches,

(1.) Their words. Their tongue is made their glory, whereby they glorify God. Instead of corrupt communication, they produce something for the use of edifying. Being translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, they learn the language of it.

(2.) The course of their works. They not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well, *1st. i. 16. 17.* They become zealous of good works, *Tit. ii. 14.* As it is but half-washing that takes away only the gross filth, but makes not clean: so it is but half-Christianity, where people satisfy themselves with not doing evil, but set not themselves to do good.

THIRDLY, I shall shew how our being washed from our sins by Christ is done and brought about. Christ washeth sinners, making use of several things to that blessed purpose.

FIRST, Christ washeth sinners, using some things more immediately for that purpose, towards them. And, *First*, Christ washeth sinners with his blood, as the most immediate cause of their cleansing. Hence the church ascribes praise to Christ, *who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, Rev. i. 5.* The blood of Christ hath that place in washing of defiled souls, that water hath in washing defiled bodies: so it is the holy water where

with we are washed from our sins. Therefore it is called

fountain

fountain, and that not only to drink at, but to wash at: *Zech. xiii. 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.* Compared with *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* This blood being applied to the soul polluted with sin, it effectually removes the filth of sin from the soul.

For understanding of this, these things are to be noted.

1. The defilement or uncleanness sin leaves on the soul, is not a bodily and visible thing, as nastiness on our bodies or cloaths, which may be taken away with hands: but it is a moral and spiritual uncleanness, viz. an unlikeness or contrariety to the holiness of God expressed in his law; so that the washing of a soul from it, is the rendering of that soul like unto God in his imitable perfections, expressed in the ten commandments, which express his image unto us, that appeared perfectly in the man Christ, being and walking exactly in every point according to these ten commands, in all their spirituality and extent.

2. By the blood of Christ in this matter, is not meant simply the blood that ran out of his veins in his circumcision, the sufferings of his life, and crucifixion; but Christ himself sacrificed for us; which sacrifice was begun from the moment of his incarnation, was continued all his life long, was perfected on the cross and in the grave, and received its actual purifying efficacy in his resurrection, as a sacrifice fully offered, and accepted for the ends it was offered for: *Tit. ii. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* *Rom. iv. 23. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* *1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Hence we owe our sanctification to the holiness of his nature, and the righteousness of his life, as well as to his death; the former being as essentially requisite to make him an effectual sacrifice for us, as the latter; since no sacrifice could atone, but what was without natural and accidental blemish. But his blood is particularly named in the case,

1//, For that the life going away with the blood in all living creatures, and so in the man Christ, the shedding of his blood was the perfecting stroke in his sacrificing himself

for us : so that we are said to be washed with his blood, as the prisoner is said to be delivered by his cautioner's paying the utmost farthing of his debt. See *Rom. i. 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* Compared with *Rom. iii. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.*

2^{dly}, For decency of expression, the term *blood* being most agreeable to the term *washing*, which relates to some liquid. Agreeable hereto was it, that after Christ being born holy, had lived holy, and died on the cross, his side was pierced, and there came forth blood and water fitted to wash : the Holy Ghost thereby teaching, that the washing or sanctifying of sinners was to proceed from Christ, in his holy birth, life, and death ; thence was the spring of purifying virtue from sin.

3. As it is by applying of water to the unclean thing, that it is washed ; so it is by applying to our souls, Christ sacrificed for us, that we are sanctified, and washed from sin. A man may stand at a river-side bedaubed with mire and dirt, till he die ; and yet be never a whit the cleaner of that river, if the water of it be not brought close upon him : so Christ, in the purifying virtue of his blood, may be within reach of the sinner's hand all his days, and yet he may die in his filth of sin, and lie in it in hell for ever, if Christ and he never come close together in a spiritual union. The blood of sacrifices was first offered to God for atonement, and then it was sprinkled on persons or things for their purification : *Heb. ix. 19. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.* Compared with *Exod. xxiv. 5.—8. And Moses sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons ; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.* The offering of the blood of Christ to God is over, near seventeen hundred

hundred years ago : but the sprinkling or application of it is still going on : *Heb. xii. 22. 24. But ye are come—to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Where it is sprinkled, they are cleansed ; where not, they lie still in their filth, having no more cleansing from sin by it, than if it had never been shed.

4. It is not every water that will wash clean ; but there is a cleansing virtue in some water, that is not in other water. I am not to inquire into the cause of that difference ; but into the cause of the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, whereby we are washed from sin, that is not in any other thing, though men have multiplied things for that end. If we inquire into the spring of the cleansing virtue that is in Christ sacrificed for us, and in no other things, we find these two.

1st, There is a real and proper merit of sinners sanctification in him. By his sacrifice of himself he has merited at the hand of God the sanctification of us, and washing us from our sin : *Eph. v. 25. 26. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it : that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.* Christ as really merited our personal holiness, and every good work we do, at the hand of God, as he merited the pardon of atheism and blasphemy to us : so absurd is the merit of our works : *Tit. ii. 14. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* *1 Pet. i. 18. 19. Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.* Now, there is no such merit in any thing else, that they should wash.

Hence Christ being applied to the soul, or his blood sprinkled on it, has a loosing efficacy, that the filth of sin is loosed from the soul it stuck close to before : even as the payment of the ransom applied to the captive, actually looses the bond of his captivity ; so as a just judge can no more suffer him to be a captive, a prisoner. I shewed before, that it is guilt that is that bond. Wherefore, for persons to pretend part with Christ, while yet their filth of sin sticks as close to them, and they to it, as ever, is to blaspheme the justice of the Father, or the merit of the Son ; as if either the one did receive the ransom, and yet not set the

the captive free; or else the other's merit was defective, and therefore ineffectual.

2dly, There is a fulness of the Spirit of holiness in him, or in his blood. Hence he is said, *Rev. iii. 1.* to have the *seven Spirits of God*. Christ sacrificed for us, is the receptacle of the Spirit of sanctification, as the animal spirits are in the blood while fresh and warm, as Christ's blood always is; that is, Christ himself as sacrificed, *Heb. x. 20*. And that Spirit of sanctification is not in other things, not in Popish penances, not in the legal performances of prayers, tears, confessions, resolutions, &c. which many Protestants use for washing themselves. All these in this case are but dead water, congealed blood without spirits, that defile, but cannot wash.

Hence Christ being applied to, or his blood sprinkled on a soul, has a cleansing efficacy, removing the filth of sin, and cleaning and brightening the soul in likeness to God: *2 Cor. iii. 18.* *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus Christ speaking of that application of himself to sinners, as by eating and drinking, which are most close even to the incorporating the meat and drink with the feeder, *John vi. 53. 54.* *Then Jesus said unto the Jews, Verily verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; gives this as the reason of the efficacy, vers. 63.* *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* As filthy sores are washed and cleansed with spirituous liquors, filthy souls are washed and cleansed with the blood of Christ, full of the Spirit of holiness.

Wherefore to pretend to part with Christ, and yet still to live in your sins, without repentance, or reformation and amendment, is to blaspheme either the blood of Christ, or his Spirit; as if either there were no Spirit of holiness in his blood, or else that that Spirit of holiness hath no efficacy to purge away the filth of sin, and make holy.

5. Washing off of filth and making clean, is according to the degree of the application of the water with its cleansing virtue. It is a very slight spot that will be quite washed off at the very first brush. There is virtue enough in the river,

at once to wash clean a filthy object; but the washer applies it but by degrees, so that it may be long ere it be got perfectly clean: so there is virtue enough in Christ to wash all whom he washes at all, perfectly clean at once; but that virtue is applied but by degrees, 2 Cor. iii. 18. forecited. Prov. iv. 18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

There is a threefold washing of sinners, according to a threefold application of Christ's blood to them.

1st, A begun washing by a begun application thereof. This is done in the work of conversion. Tit. iii. 5. it is called the *washing of regeneration*. Here the soul that before all along was lying in wickedness together with the unclean world, being taken out from among them by effectual calling, and united to Christ by faith, and so having part with him, is washed from his filthiness, by an application of the blood of Christ, that never touched him before, but now streams over him in union with Christ: Ezek. xvi. 2. 9. *Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.*

Concerning the washing, the effect of this application, observe,

(1.) It is a washing all over; a washing of every part, though not quite clean in any part: 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.* Therefore it is called a *new birth*: Tit. iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* John iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* We do not say a child is born, when his head, or feet, or an arm are born; but when the whole child is brought forth. Some shew a head, that, with notions of the principles of religion in it, and a tongue to talk of them, seems to be washed; others shew feet, that, by going in the road of outward reformation, and some external duties, seem to be washed. But it is not the *washing of regeneration*; for it goes not all over them: they are new in some things, but they

they are just what they were in other things. Trace them to their walk in their employments and relations, to the entertainment given to the beloved lust, to the inner man, and set of their heart with respect to the purity of the holy law; and they are just the same with *the world lying in wickedness*. That is an evidence, that their washing is with their own nitre and sope, not with the blood of Christ.

(2.) It is a washing that puts one in a state of cleanness, bringing him out of a state of filthiness: *John xiii. 10. He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.* There is a difference between one lying in a mire, and another that has dirtied his feet; though both need washing, the latter needs but to wash his feet. Such is the case of the unregenerate and regenerate: *Cant. vi. 10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?* When the dawning is come, it is true it is not broad day-light; but yet it is day, not night. The moon has her spots, yet she is not filthy, but fair.

(3.) That state of cleanness can never be lost, *John xiii. 10. forecited.* Many seem to be brought to a state of cleanness, but at length they turn apostates: that says, they were never out of the state of filthiness, and the church of God was but beguiled with them, when they took them for persons in a state of cleanness. They that are once washed, will never apostatize, nor go back again to wallow in the mire: *1 John ii. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*

2dly, A continued and progressive washing, by a continued progressive application of Christ's blood to the soul. This is done and carried on all along from the first conversion of a sinner, until his death. Therefore though the elders were about the throne in white, yet there was a sea of glass before it, *Rev. iv. 4. 6.* And the fountain stands opened for the house of *David*, as well as for the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, *Zech. xiii. 1.*; for saints, as well as for sinners. They that deeming themselves once washed, find no need of washing more, proclaim themselves not washed by Christ, as do they who betake themselves for it to another laver. They that are come to Christ for washing, are still coming, *1 Pet. ii. 4.*

Two things make this continued washing necessary.

(1.) Continued

(1.) Continued imperfection in the washing of the soul during this life, *Philip. iii. 12.* Believers are in no moment of time perfectly clean; in their most shining moments they are still but as the moon, not without their spots. So that they never want matter of exercise, in purging work, that they may arrive at a perfect purity: *1 John iii. 3.* Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

(2.) New defilements contracted continually. Though they never lose the state of cleanness, yet they are always needing to wash their feet: *John xiii. 10.* He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. An allusion to the priests in the temple-service. They are all priests to God, and so washed: but while they go about, such is the defiling world they walk in, the remains of defilement in them, that in every thing they contract some spot; *James iii. 2.* For in many things we offend all. Their heart and life have so many remaining seeds of corruption, that they never want occasion to pluck up weeds.

Now, this continued washing is by the continued application of Christ's blood, and no other way: *1 John i. 7.* The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. For,

[1.] This is the way the saints have looked for it; as David, *Psal. li. 2.* Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. *vers. 7.* Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. As the lepers could, by no art of their own, be so purified as to be admitted to society, but by the priests sprinkling them; so sinners, by no art or endeavours of their own, can be purified so as to be admitted to fellowship with God, but by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon them. Therefore the sea of glass, which is the blood of Christ, stands before the throne, that whosoever would have communion with God, may wash there, and so be fitted for it.

[2.] There is no merit of holiness, nor fulness of the Spirit in any thing else. The doings and sufferings of saints are as free of merit, as those of sinners: *Luke xvii. 10.* So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. Neither is there any thing of the Spirit in them, but so far as the blood of Christ is sprinkled on them, rendering them acceptable,

Rev. vii. 14. 2 Cor. ii. 16. But in the blood of Christ there is a never-failing merit, a constant fulness of the Spirit, to which the soul may have continual recourse for washing, as to a fountain never dry.

3dly, A perfect washing, by a full application of the blood of Christ. And this takes place at death, *Heb. xii. 23.—To the spirits of just men, made perfect.* Then believers washed in conversion, and who have been all along washed in the blood of Christ, are by the same means made quite clean and without spot : *Eph. v. 25. 26. 27. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it : that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.* This lies in two things.

(1.) The doing away the remains of sin wholly. The reigning power of sin being broken by the first application, it is gradually removed by further application, and quite carried off by the full application at death. Not the least stain, nor mark of it, will then be left on the believing soul. But the filth of sin now carried off in part from the whole man, will then be wholly carried off from every part.

(2.) The perfecting of the image of God : *1 John iii. 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.* The several lineaments of it are indeed drawn now upon the believer, but mixed with corruption in every part : but then it shall be without mixture, every part getting the finishing stroke in that image, *1 Cor. xiii. 10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.* So shall they shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever, *Dan. xii. 3. The righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, Matth. xiii. 43.*

Now, it is by a full application of the blood of Christ, that is, by a full participation of Christ crucified in his purifying virtue, that this washing is made : *Rev. vii. 14. 15. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them.* The cleansing virtue going out from him to the soul in some measure now, will then

then go out in full measure, as when a sluice is opened, and carries all away before it: 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Compared with 1 John iii. 2. forecited. The soul putting off the body, unites more closely with Christ than ever, and so partakes of his merit, and fulness of Spirit, to a pitch of perfection: Eph. iv. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

Secondly, Christ washeth sinners by his Spirit: Tit. iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* 2 Thess. ii. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* And the Spirit of Christ has that place in washing defiled souls, that the hand of the washer hath in washing the defiled body of another. The hand being the instrument of action with men, the Spirit of Christ is held forth under that notion, the whole work of the application of Christ's redemption to us being done by him: Acts xi. 21. *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.* Is. liiii. 1. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Matth. xii. 28. *But if I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.* Compared with Luke xi. 20. *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.* So Christ washeth sinners with his blood, by his Spirit: John iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* 1 John v. 8. *And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.* This the Apostle very plainly teacheth, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* So Christ's hand has never come on that soul for washing, which is destitute of the Spirit of Christ: Rom. viii. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Now, of the work of the Spirit of Christ in the washing of a sinner, we may take a view in the following particulars.

1. The Spirit of Christ discovers to the sinner his pollution and defilement of soul: *John xvii. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.* He brightens the glass of the holy commandments of the word, and he opens the sinner's eyes, and determines him to look into that glass: and so the sinner getting a new sight of the holiness and purity of God, *Hab. i. 13.* gets a new sight of himself, that he cries out, with the leper, *Unclean, unclean*; and says, with the church, *Is. lxiv. 6. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.* Then he sees that loathsomeness in sin that he saw not before; the loathsomeness of his nature, heart, and life; not excepting those sins he looked on formerly as beauty-spots, glorying in them, *Philip. iii. 19.* And he is filled with shame and confusion before the Lord; like those, *Jer. iii. 22. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. vers. 25. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.* And if ye have no experience of this, ye have no part with Christ.

2. He discovers to the sinner the laver wherein he may be washed from that spiritual pollution, the fountain wherein he may be purified, viz. the blood of Christ, or Christ himself as crucified and sacrificed for us: *1 Cor. ii. 12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* Here is the only effectual mean for purification, the only true purgatory, Jesus Christ in the purifying virtue of his blood, *Heb. i. 3.* And the Spirit points it out to the sinner. This is called *revealing of the Son*, *Gal. i. 16.*; in our Catechism, "enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ." Concerning which ye may note,

1st, That it is natural to men under a sense of their filthiness, to look to and run to lavers of their own for washing themselves, however ineffectual they are: *Hos. v. 13. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.* Hence the first question, *What shall we do to be saved?* They have neither eyes to see, nor hearts for the blood of Christ, as the alone mean of washing from sin. The whole ceremonial

trial law pointed the *Israelites* to Christ as the only remedy for soul pollution, yet they are as great strangers to it, as if they had never heard of it. Hence we have these questions, with the Lord's answer, *Mic. vi. 6. 7. 8. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

2dly, It is the work of the Spirit alone to discover it, so as to bring the unclean soul to it. As *Hagar* saw not the well, though it was near her, till the Lord opened her eyes; so the sinner sees not the opened fountain for sin and uncleanness, till the Spirit enlighten the mind: *John xvi. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* And he shews it effectually to the sinner, together with the ineffectualness of all things else for that purpose. And,

(1.) The Spirit shews the ineffectualness of all other, in the glass of the law in its spirituality and extent. There the sinner beholds all that he can do or suffer needs itself to be washed, being polluted and defiled, and so that it can defile him, but not wash him. Hence says the church, *Is. lxiv. 6. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

(2.) In the glass of the promise of the gospel, he shews the true laver, Christ Jesus: *John iii. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* The Spirit brings home the promise of the gospel, and demonstrates it to the sinner, *1 Cor. ii. 4.* And he demonstrates,

[1.] The infallible efficacy of it to cleanse from sin: *1 Thess. i. 5. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.* Notwithstanding of all that the word saith of the efficacy of Christ's blood to wash from sin, that mystery is but folly to carnal men, till the demonstration of the Spirit come: *1 Cor. i. 23. 24. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks, foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,*

Christ

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Then the soul says, as *Matth. ix. 21.* *If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.*

[2.] The sinner's access to it in particular; that the fountain is not only open, but open for him, *1 Cor. ii. 4. 5.* If this be not, the sinner can never apply it to himself by faith. And this the Spirit doth by opening the general warrant of the word, and applying it particularly to the sinner.

3. He brings the sinner into the laver, puts him into the water as it were. We are naturally in the case of that man at the pool, who said, *John v. 7.* *I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.* Though the laver of Christ's blood be near by us, we cannot put in ourselves for washing. Now, the Spirit does the sinner this good office: and he does it by uniting him to Christ, whereby the unclean soul is plunged into the fountain opened for sin: *1 Cor. xii. 13.* *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* And the Spirit brings the sinner into the laver,

1st, Passively, entering into the dead and defiled soul, whereby the soul is quickened: *Ezek. xxxvi. 27.* *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* *Rom. viii. 9.* *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Christ communicates the Spirit, which is his own Spirit dwelling in him, to the dead and defiled soul; and so the soul is passively united to Christ, and quickened. Thus Christ draws the sinner to him for washing, by the Spirit.

2dly, Actively, working faith in the sinner, whereby he comes to Christ, and unites with him: *Col. ii. 12.* *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* Compared with *2 Cor. iv. 13.* *We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak.* *Eph. iii. 17.* *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* The soul being drawn, runs; being united to Christ, unites with him; being put into the opened fountain, dips himself over head and ears in it, *Rom. iii. 25.* This actual believing the Spirit produces in the sinner immediately out of the spiritual life given by the communication

tion of himself to him: *Philip. ii. 13. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. John v. 25. Verily verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.* Compared with chap. i. 12. 13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Now, the unclean sinner thus brought to Christ, and united to him, is in the fountain, and cannot miss to be washed from his sins with the blood of Christ: and the only hand that brings him there, is the Spirit of Christ. Now, he has part with Christ, communion necessarily following upon the union.

4. *Lastly*, The Spirit washeth the unclean soul in the laver, applying Christ to it in the purifying virtue of his blood; as one washeth an unclean person in water, applying the water to him: *1 Pet. i. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* And according to the degree of that application of Christ to the sinner, in the purifying virtue of his blood, made by the Spirit, such is the degree of the sanctification or washing of the sinner. For understanding of this mystery, consider,

1st, The soul being united to Christ, is clothed with his merit, as for justification, so for sanctification also: *Rev. iii. 18. I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.* Sanctification is a great privilege and costly, bought with the Redeemer's blood: *1 Pet. i. 18. 19. Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* And the merit or righteousness of Christ being on a man, by union with Christ, is the ground in law for his partaking of the benefit of sanctification, as a benefit purchased for him: even as the guilt of Adam's first sin on us, is the ground in law for God's denying us the sanctification of our nature in our birth, upon which the corruption of nature is conveyed to us from Adam.

2^{dly},

2dly, Sinners united to Jesus Christ, have communion with him in his death and resurrection; i. e. they have a common interest with him therein, they are in law-reckoning their death and resurrection too: *Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* The reason is, because Christ died and rose again as a public person, their head, in their name: *Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* And this communion with Christ in his death and resurrection, is the spring of their sanctification; it is that which sets all the wheels in motion, that concur to the washing them from their sins: *Rom. vi. 3.—6. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death: we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

3dly, Christ dying put off from himself the whole body of all our sins, which before were upon him by imputation; and rose again without sin imputed, as he was ever without sin inherent: *Rom. vi. 10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* For he by his death having fully satisfied for sins, the guilt of them whereby they clave to him, was dissolved of course, and he shook them all off as *Paul* did the viper into the fire, having no more power to cleave to him or hurt him. Which death and resurrection being of a public person, their head, hath, by the merit thereof, a power of conforming all his members thereto, in dying to sin, and rising to newness of life; even as there was a contrary power in *Adam's* sin and death: *Philip. iii. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* Compared with *Rom. vi. 5. 6.* above-cited.

4thly, Sinners having communion with Christ in this his death and resurrection, are in him legally dead to sin, freed from it in point of right, and alive spiritually to God: *Rom.*

vi. 10. 11. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The body of the sins of the flesh is legally put off them, and they are clean: even as the captive or prisoner to whom is legally applied the paying of the ransom or debt by the cautioner, is, in the moment of that application, legally free, and no more a captive or prisoner in point of right; though it may take some time ere he be brought freely out of the dungeon, and his prison-garments be got all of them off, and his irons be all knocked off.

5thly, Upon this ground the Spirit applies Christ's death and resurrection really to them, conforming them in their own persons thereto: even as when the judge hath legally applied the payment of the ransom to the captive, by sustaining it as paid for him; a messenger applies it really by opening the prison-doors, knocking off the chains, and bringing him out: Gal. vi. 14. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Philip. iii. 10. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. Compared with 1 Pet. i. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. So that by the Spirit they are changed into the image of Christ dead and risen again: 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Rom. vi. 5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

6thly, The Spirit applies Christ's blood, death, and resurrection, to sinners, really, by conveying from Christ the head, unto them as his members, a certain measure and degree of that all-fulness of grace that is lodged in him, which he died to purchase, and rose again to apply: Col. ii. 19. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. John i. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Compared with John xvi. 14. 15. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore said

I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All the grace that is in the saints in heaven or earth, or ever shall be, comes from the fulness of grace in the man Christ; as all the light of the world from the sun: and the Spirit communicates it to them from him. Now, all graces are in Christ, and the Spirit communicates to his members of them all, *John i. 16.* forecited.

7thly, Thus the blood of Christ applied by the Spirit, penetrates or seeks in to the unclean soul, to the washing it from its filthiness: *Ezek. xxxvi. 25.* *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* For whosoever that grace comes, it must needs have a twofold effect: (1.) To remove sin according to its measure, and so to carry off spiritual filthiness. Where humility comes, pride goes; where heavenliness of mind takes place, there sensuality and worldliness are dislodged; and so of other graces. For grace and sin are two contraries; whereof as the one gains, the other must needs lose. (2.) To beautify and brighten the soul. Hence she is, like *the king's daughter, all glorious within; her cloathing is of wrought gold, Psal. xlv. 13.* For the more grace one has, the more he is like God. And this grace is immediately derived to us from Christ; who is *the image of the invisible God*, and therefore *fairer than the children of men*, *Psal. xlv. 2.*; that we being thereby rendered like Christ, may be rendered like God, in his imitable perfections.

8thly, This communication of grace, by the Spirit, from Christ, to us being united to Christ, is the Spirit's applying Christ's blood to us; inasmuch as the blood of Christ is as it were the vehicle of his grace, as the water is of the sope, that cleansing thing, *Mal. iii. 2.* Christ is like *fuller's sope*. In this view is that prayer for sanctification, *Psal. li. 2.* *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Wash me,* namely, as a fuller doth. In vain is the sope used without the water for washing; and in vain will we look for sanctification by the grace of Christ, without the merit of his blood on us. It is in the stream of his blood going over our souls, that his grace is brought into and left in them, to the beautifying them in holiness. By the merit of it, it hath a double effect. One relative, and immediate, to our justification. Hence the Apostle, *Heb. xii. 24.* speaks of *coming to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Another effect it has, real, and mediate,

to our sanctification. Hence the Apostle describes Christians as, *1 Pet. i. 2. elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* And this is effected through the grace of Christ that it brings down with it. It is the bruising of the bread-corn that fits it to be bread; the dying of the corn of wheat, that brings forth more wheat: so it is the crucifying of Christ, that fitted him to be a fountain of grace, whereof sinners might drink; it is the blood or death of Christ that makes *Christians, i. e.* men after his image, *John xii. 24.* Thus the Spirit's conveying of grace from Christ to us, is his sprinkling us with the blood of Christ for our sanctification, *1 Pet. i. 2.*; to be distinguished, though not divided, from the sprinkling for our justification, *Heb. xii. 24.*

Lastly, According to the measure of the former sprinkling or application of the blood of Christ, so is the measure of our sanctification, purification, and cleansing, from sin. The other having only a relative and immediate effect, is not capable of degrees; so it is alike in all believers. But this having a real and mediate effect through the grace conveyed in it, is made in very different degrees and measures, as a spring or fountain running into a vessel. And there are three degrees of this application of Christ's blood by the Spirit, as before observed.

1ST, A begun application of it, in the soul's union with Christ at first in effectual calling. That moment the sinner becomes a member of Christ, the Spirit begins the application of Christ's blood to him for his sanctification, conveying real inherent grace to him from Christ his head, *2 Thess. ii. 13.* compared with *John xvi. 14.* and *i. 16.* The sluice of grace in Christ that was quite stopt before as to the sinner, is then opened in a measure to run over him for his washing from sin. And as to this measure,

1. It is some measure of all saving grace that is then communicated to the believer from Christ, his head, by the Spirit: *John i. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* As the wax receives every point in the seal, so the believer receives every grace in the man Christ. Hence the Apostle, *Eph. i. 13.* speaks of believers being *sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.* As all saving graces are lodged in Christ without measure, *John iii. 34.* so a seed of them all is communicated to his members, *1 John iii. 9.* of faith, love, repentance, or a set of heart turning God-ward, humility,

humility, meekness, &c. And though some graces may be more apparent and topping in a believer, than others; yet he wants none of them altogether, *Heb. viii. 10.* The effect of this is the habitual sanctification of the believer, whereby the dominion of sin is broken; the pollution and defilement by sin is begun to be removed, and the soul is made habitually holy. More particularly, hereby,

1st, The believer's nature is renewed, *Eph. iv. 23. 24.* He is renewed in the whole man, his whole person, soul and body, *1 Thess. v. 23.* There are quite new qualities derived from Christ, into his mind, will, and affections; habits of grace infused into them by the Spirit from Christ, which habits of grace are the immediate principle of gracious actions, distinct from the new vital powers that go before faith. The body is renewed in communion with the renewed soul. Hence the Apostle exhorts the *Romans*, *Rom. vi. 13.* *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* So sanctification is quite another thing than the bare amending of our lives; and holiness quite another thing than moral virtue, which can never give us this new nature.

2^{dly}, He becomes a new creature, *2 Cor. v. 17.*; not only a spiritually living creature, as in the quickening of the dead soul, *John v. 25.* before faith in effectual calling, called the first regeneration, *John i. 12. 13.* answering to the conception in natural generation; but a new creature in all its parts, by the work of sanctification; a second regeneration following after faith, and answering to the forming of the conception into the distinct members in the womb, however small, *Tit. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 10. i. 13.* Hence there is not only a new head, feet, or life, in the case; but a new man, where all saving graces concur, as all the several members in a human body.

3^{dly}, He is made over again in the image of God, bearing his image as a child of the father, *Col. iii. 10.* And this comes to pass, in that the new creature being entirely sprung from Christ, being made by receiving from him grace for grace in him, must needs be his image, *Gal. iv. 19.* And he is the image of God; therefore it must be the image of God too. Thus *Eve* was made after God's image, but mediocrately, being made after *Adam's* image, who was made immediately

ately after God's, *Gen. ii. 18.* margin, compared with *1 Cor. xi. 7. 8.*

Lastly, He becomes one spirit with Christ, which is the oneness with Christ that is the result of our uniting with him, *1 Cor. vi. 17. He that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.* The Spirit is the principal cause, faith the instrumental cause, joining or uniting us to Christ; but this is it whereby Christ and the believer formally coalesce or go together into one, *viz. one spirit, i. e. one spiritual nature, Heb. ii. 11.:* even as *Eve* was one flesh with *Adam*, being made of him, of his flesh and bones; to which the Apostle alludes, *Eph. v. 30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* Suppose a tree had a virtue of changing the graft into its own nature, as Christ has; the gardener ingrafts, the graft by his art unites close with the stock: then the stock conveys of its juice into the graft, whereby the nature of the graft is changed; here is the oneness arising from the uniting, they are one tree, of one nature. So the Spirit puts the soul to Christ, by faith it unites close with him: then Christ by his Spirit conveys of his graces to the soul, which change its nature into his own, and so they go into one, *viz. one spiritual or divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. partaking of it with him, and that from him.* So they are his seed, *Jf. liii. 10.*

Lastly, He is put in a near capacity for all acts of holy obedience, whether in doing or suffering, *Dent. xxx. 6. Heb. viii. 10.;* the seed of the several saving graces derived from Christ, and implanted in him, tending of their own nature to spring according to their several kinds. If the seed of any grace were wanting in him, then he would be in no near capacity for acting that grace wanting. Likeas a dead man, who is not only quickened by a miracle, but is risen and come out of the grave, is in an immediate disposition for the common actions of life; so in this case of sanctification, the soul is not only quickened, as it is in effectual calling, but is in the nearest capacity to walk what way the Lord calls: *Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* In effectual calling, Christ says to the sinner, *Arise;* in sanctification he says, *Loose him, and let him go.*

2. But it is not a full measure of any grace that is then communicated from Christ by his Spirit to the believer:

For

For we know but in part, says the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. And says the same Apostle, Rom. vii. 23. *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* The believer has derived to him from Christ, the graces of faith, love, &c. but none of them in perfection: even as when the child is perfectly formed in the womb, there is head, eyes, hands, feet, &c. but all of them very small, none of them come to perfection. Now, so far as they go, they do remove sin with its pollution off the soul: but they cannot fill up the room in any part; therefore there are remains of corruption in every part, mind, will, and affections, and the body in communion with the corrupt part, Rom. vii. 14.

Now, the consequent of this is an imperfection of sanctification: the believer is sanctified, but not perfectly sanctified. More particularly, hence,

1st, There are two contrary principles in believers; the flesh and spirit, the new and old man, the new nature derived to them from the *Second Adam*, the old unrenewed nature from the *first Adam*: the one the old inhabitant, the other the new incomer upon it; like the house of Saul, and the house of David, in Israel. Hence believers are a mystery to the world, yea to themselves: *Cant. vi. 13. Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee: what will ye see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.* Rom. vii. 16. 17. *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

2dly, There is a continual combat in them, between these two contrary principles, being together side for side, as it were, in every part: *Gal. v. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Thus the believer is like Rebekah, *Gen. xxv. 22. 23.* who had the children struggling together within her; and who was told by the Lord, upon her inquiring into the affair, that two nations were in her womb, and two manner of people should be separated from her bowels. The two armies war in the Shulamite, *Cant. vi. 13.* So that the believer's heart by that means is often like a field of battle, where there is much confusion and struggle. There is something like this found sometimes in the unregenerate; but

but in them the struggle is between the flesh in one part lusting, and the flesh in another part fearing, 2 *Pet.* ii. 15. compared with *Num.* xxii. 18. In the saints it is between the flesh and the spirit in one and the same part, receiving and refusing the same spiritual truth or falsehood, willing and nilling the same good or evil, of its own proper motion, *Rom.* vii. 15. 16. forecited.

3dly, Neither their good nor ill actions are carried to perfection, *Gal.* v. 17. forecited. For the two contrary principles being thus yoked, neither of them gets its full swing. When grace prevails to carry the good point, yet corruption clogs it in some measure; and when corruption prevails, grace clogs it in some measure: *Cant.* iv. 2. *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing: whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them.* Saints in heaven in good, and unregenerate men in evil, are like strong men travelling in a calm day; saints on earth, in good or ill, are like men travelling with a strong wind blowing in their face, that cannot make the way, that otherwise they would.

3. Howbeit, it is a predominant measure of grace that is then conveyed by the Spirit from Christ to the soul: *Rom.* vi. 14. *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Grace is put in the heart to rule, though in midst of its enemies, which makes it difficult to maintain its superiority. Not that it is predominant in every particular event and encounter; experience testifies the contrary. Hence says the Apostle, *Rom.* vii. 23. *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* But it is fundamentally and habitually predominant; that is, it is more firmly rooted as an immortal seed against a mortal one, and generally speaking it prevails. Hence,

1st, The dominion and reigning power of sin is broken, *Rom.* vi. 14. forecited. It is turned off the throne it had before, and is put under the check of a superior principle. Hence the Apostle saith, 1 *John* iii. 9. *Whoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* Thus Christ delivers the soul from that enemy, to serve him. Hence is that of the Prophet, *Is.* ix. 4. *Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, in the day of Midian.* Indwelling it may be for a time, and,

and, as a troublesome guest, breed much disturbance in the house: but it is no more master of the house. This was typified by the remains of the *Canaanites* in the land, which *Israel* could not drive out, but yet brought them under tribute, *Judg. i. 19. &c.*

2dly, It shall be quite expelled at length: *Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* Whatever particular battles it wons, the war shall end in its ruin: *1 John v. 4. Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.* When the true *Israelite* comes to the red-sea of death, these *Egyptians* shall be swallowed up there, and he shall see them all dead on the shore. Sin is crucified by the incoming of grace, and though the thief being on the cross may rage and blaspheme, yet shall he never come down till he breathe out his last.

2dly, There is a continued application of the blood of Christ made to the believer by the Spirit, during his after continuing in the world. For the soul once united to Christ, his Spirit dwells in it ever after, never quits his dwelling. Hence Christ said to his disciples, *John xiv. 16, 17. I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* And the Spirit continues that application to it from time to time till death, conveying fresh supplies of grace to it from Christ the head. Hence the grace of Christ conveyed to believers is held forth under the notion of a spring-well; (*John iv. 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*); which is still affording new water. The fulness of grace in Christ is the spring-head, *Col. ii. 19.* The receivers into which it runs, are believers, his members, that receive supplies of grace from him, as the branches supplies of juice from the stock: *John xv. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.* And the conveyer of these supplies from the head to the members, *Philip. i. 18.* with *vers. 11.* is the Spirit. For clearing of this purpose, consider,

1. Though one is renewed, and has the seed of all grace planted in him, in the begun application issuing in habitual sanctification; yet he is not able of himself to exercise one
grace,

grace, to wash off one remaining spot, or add to himself one stroke of purity: but thereto is necessary a new supply by the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 4. 5. Even of our gracious selves we can do nothing: can bring forth no fruit of grace, John xv. 5. even when furnished with gracious qualities. This is not so very strange; if we consider, that though we have the power of natural motion, yet we cannot move a finger without a common providential influence of the Spirit, Acts xvii. 28. *For in him we live, and move, and have our being.* Though fresh seed be cast into the earth, if the influence of the sun and rain is with-held, it springs not.

2. Hence every gracious act of ours is a fruit of the Spirit produced by him in us, through these supplies of grace; as the springing of the seed is by the warmth and moisture it gets from the heavens, Gal. v. 22. 23. Eph. v. 9. Hence the Spirit is said to *lust against the flesh*, Gal. v. 17. as producing these lustings in us; even as he is said to *groan*, Rom. viii. 26. So every act of mortification is by the Spirit, Rom. viii. 13. *If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* And so also is every act of obedience, Philip. ii. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* So that take away the Spirit, and ye take away all true holiness.

3. These supplies of grace are given in such a measure only, in the continued application; as in the begun application. There is some measure of every grace supplied, Col. ii. 19. Hence, (Eph. v. 9.), *the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.* But there is not a full measure of any grace: 1 Cor. xiii. 9. *For we know but in part.* Yet there is a predominant measure, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Hence the imperfection of actual sanctification; there are still some spots to wash off while here. Washing of foul cloaths will take time; there is much work for the hands there. But the washing of foul souls ordinarily takes more than the longest work of that kind. The Spirit could wash us perfectly clean in an instant, by a full application of the blood; but it is otherwise ordered. The thief on the cross was washed clean in a moment: but ordinarily the washing is gradual.

4. *Lastly*, These continued supplies of grace continue the washing of the soul; inasmuch as thereby,

1st, Inherent grace is preserved, that it die not out, amidst so many snares and temptations. It is but a created quality, and of itself would wither away and die out, and so

leave the soul overwhelmed anew with the filth of sin, if it were not fed. Hence the Lord says, *If. xxvii. 3. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* John xv. 5. 6. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* But the continued supplies from Christ by the Spirit, render it an abiding immortal seed, 1 Cor. i. 8. 9. compared with John xiv. 19. Jude vers. 1.

2dly, Inherent grace is excited, that it lie not idle, *Cant. v. 4.* Sometimes it lies like fire under the ashes; new supplies coming in by the Spirit, it is stirred up, and casts abroad its light in the soul. Hence the Spirit is compared to the wind, *Cant. iv. 16.* Being excited to action, it removes sin; as the stopt spring loosed, works out the mud. And,

3dly, It is increased and strengthened, that it may act more vigorously towards the expulsion of its enemy, *Col. i. 10. Eph. iii. 16. If. xl. 29.* As an addition of sope makes the washing go on more thoroughly, so the fresh supplies of grace from Christ by the Spirit carry on the washing of the soul, causing the stream run higher to the carrying off more of the filth of sin, and beautifying the soul more.

3dly, There is a full application of the blood of Christ to the soul made by the Spirit at death. That moment the soul and body are separated, the Spirit brings in a full stream of grace from Christ into the soul, *Eph. iii. 19.* with 1 Cor. xiii. 8. 9. 10. The communication of grace which was before but in part, is then made perfect. For clearing of this purpose, note, that,

1. The perfection of grace taking place in the souls of believers at death, comes from the same spring as at conversion, and after, till death. It is all communicated to them from Christ their head, with this difference only, that the stream of it that ran small and scanty before, is then made to run full, as when a sluice is fully opened. As, out of his fulness, they got grace for grace in Christ, in some measure, before; so then, out of the same fulness, they get a fulness of grace for grace in him. For they grow to their perfection in him, as members of him, and therefore by communication from him, *Eph. iv. 13.* The new creature is both formed and perfected the same way.

2. It is the same Spirit who conveys the perfection of grace from Christ to believers at death, that conveyed the first grace, and the supplies thereof: the same Spirit who forms, and nourishes the new creature, in the time of this life, brings it to its perfection and full growth at death, *Philip. i. 6. Psal. cxxxviii. 8.* And as to the measure he then communicates,

1st, It is a full measure, such as wholly renews them in every part, perfecting the image of Christ, and so of God, on them, and utterly abolishing all remains of sin in them, *2 Cor. iv. 16. with Heb. xii. 23. Rev. vii. 14. 15.* Thus they are washed perfectly clean, no spot is left in them, all being carried off by the full flood of grace conveyed then from Christ to them. And thus they are enabled to serve the Lord in perfection for ever, *Rev. xxii. 3. with 1 Cor. xiii. 10.*

2^{dly}, Yet is it not such a measure, as that they never need more: no, but they will always be kept full, by the Spirit's communicating eternally to them full supplies of grace from Christ their head: *Rev. vii. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* Compared with *John xvi. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* There will be nothing any more to stop or retard the flowing of grace from Christ into them; but the fountain will empty of its fulness into them without interruption. That there shall be such an eternal communication to them from Christ by the Spirit, is evident, in that they continue for ever members of Christ; and members cannot act but by continued communications of influences from their head: *John xiv. 16. 17. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. John xv. 4. 5. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

From what is said on this head, we draw these inferences.

1. They are not washed from their filthiness, that have never had a discovery of the filth of sin made to them by

the Spirit. Men may get a sight of the guilt of sin, that will fill them with fear and terror; that yet get no kindly sight of the filth of sin, filling them with shame and self-loathing before the Lord. But without this last, there is no sanctification: *Ezek. xxxvi. 21. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.* Therefore never think ye have seen sin aright, till ye see it in the monstrous filthiness of it, as opposite to the holiness of God: it is that only will turn one's stomach on it, and cause them to vomit it up by true repentance.

2. The filthiness of the soul by sin is never duly seen, till it appear so ingrained as nothing but the blood of Christ can wash it off. They evidence but slight thoughts of the filth of sin, that think it can be carried off by prayers, confessions, tears, and outward reformation: therefore the Spirit carries the elect beyond all these to the laver of Christ's blood. Hence *David* prayed, *Psal. li. 2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* There only is there merit and efficacy sufficient to wash out the pollution.

3. Whosoever truly come to Christ by faith, they come to him for sanctification, as well as justification; that they may be washed from the filth of sin by him, as well as freed from the guilt of sin through him. Hence faith is a coming to the waters, *Is. lv. 1.* and that to be washed in them, *Zech. xiii. 1.* It is but false faith that looks to Christ for freedom from guilt and the wrath of God, and not for conformity to God in holiness.

4. For to stand off from Christ, and uniting with him by believing on him, till one has made himself clean and fit for Christ, is the work of a false heart, marring the soul's washing; not the work of the Spirit, carrying on the washing of the soul. For it is the work of the Spirit to put the unclean soul in the laver, uniting it to Christ, that it may be made clean. Therefore let no pollution of sin whatsoever keep you back from Christ; but let the consideration of your pollution drive you forward to him; and the greater it is, ye have the more need to make speed, and unite the more closely with Christ.

5. Whosoever are united to Christ by the Spirit, are sanctified persons, truly regenerate, new creatures: *2 Cor. v. 17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things*

things are past away, behold, all things are become new. In vain do men pretend to be members of Christ, while they remain unsanctified in their nature and life. Can one be united to Christ in whom the fulness of grace is lodged, and yet there be no communication of grace from him to them? or can there be such a communication, and yet they not be renewed after his image? and if a new nature, must there not be a new life?

6. lastly, True Christianity is in its own nature a progressive thing, going towards perfection. Hence says the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* It is a most dismal sign, where a person having, as he thinks, embraced Christ for salvation, and so secured himself for eternity, is no further careful to advance in practical religion, but continues easy, being at a stand; seeing the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, *Prov. iv. 18.* It is true, a real believer may not only be at a stand for a while, but may be going back: but it is of the nature of grace, as of a seed, or the morning light, to go forward and increase, till it come to perfection, *John iv. 14. Eph. iv. 13.* This is the result of the continued application of the blood of Christ to the believer by the Spirit. Therefore observe whether ye grow or not.

Thirdly, Christ washeth sinners through faith. Hence the Apostle, *Acts xv. 9.* speaks of *purifying the heart by faith*; and, *xxvi. 18.* of being *sent to open mens eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ.* And faith has that place in the washing of defiled souls, that the hand of the party washed hath in the washing of himself, under the management of the principal washer. For faith is the hand of the soul, *John i. 12.* And in the spiritual washing it is active. The soul being first passively washed by the Spirit, washeth itself by faith; being put into the laver by the Spirit, it applies the water by faith, *2 Cor. vii. 1.* Yet Christ by his Spirit is still the principal cause of the washing; forasmuch as he both works faith in the soul, and then by new influences, puts it in exercise; *Philip. ii. 13. For it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* And so faith is the instrumental

mental cause of our washing from sin, *Acts* xv. 9. forecited.

Now, the efficacy of faith in the washing of the soul lies in these following things, under these two heads.

1. It is the eye of the soul in that matter, and so it is an impulsive cause moving the sinner to wash away his sin, *Gal.* ii. 16; and is supposed in such calls, as that *Jf.* i. 26. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well.* Now, by the eye of faith,

1st, The man discerns his pollution, that he is all over defiled, and unlike God: *Jf.* lxiv. 6. *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* He looks into the glass of the word, which is a representation of God's holiness, and so represents the sinner as vile and loathsome. The man believes the representation to be true, and so cries out, as *Job* xl. 4. *Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.* This glass is held to the eyes of others; but being unbelievers, they see not their universal pollution for all it. But thus the believer sees the need of washing.

2^{dly}, He discerns the depth of the stain, that it can be washed out by no human art. Faith brings, from the testimony of the word, that report into the soul, *Jer.* ii. 22. *For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.* Unbelievers are ruined in their pollution for want of this; they see not how deep their defilement lies; so they think their own nitre and sope will do their business, that *Abana* and *Pharpar* may cleanse the leper, as well as any other water, *Hos.* v. 13. But faith sees them all physicians of no value; and so the believer sees the need of another laver than any of them.

3^{dly}, He discerns the ill of his pollution on the one hand, and the good of the washing on the other. By faith the man is persuaded of the destructive nature of sin, and its contrariety to God's nature and will: and he is persuaded too of the beauty and excellency of holiness, or purification from sin. The one he sees in the glass of the law, its threatenings and commands; the other in the glass of the gospel, in the face of Jesus. And these are a spur to incite him to seek to be washed, *Luke* xv. 17. 18.

4^{thly}, He discerns the laver, Christ crucified, *Jf.* xlv. 22. By the help of the glass of the gospel, he takes up the sea of Christ's

Christ's blood, as the only laver for unclean souls, *Matth. ix. 20. 21.* And by faith the unclean soul discerns Christ the laver,

(1.) As an efficacious laver in all cases, *1 John i. 7.* *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* The man believes that Christ is able to wash out the deepest stain, to make the filthiest soul clean, according to the word, *Is. i. 18.* *Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* This is necessary, as appears in the case of the blind men, *Matth. ix. 28. 29.* *Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.*

(2.) As an open laver in its own case, *Zech. xiii. 1.* *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.* Compared with *Heb. xi. 6.* *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* This is believing the gospel, one's warrant to come to Christ, without which none can come. For if one should look on the fountain as open to all the world, but only sealed to him, this will effectually mar his access to it, *Jer. ii. 25.* *Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* But faith says, *Psal. lxxv. 3.* *Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

2. Faith is the hand of the soul in that matter, and so it is an instrumental cause of washing away sin. And by the hand of faith,

1st, The soul embraceth Christ, and unites with him: *John i. 12.* *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* Compared with *Eph. iii. 17.* *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* The soul, at its first union with Christ, being plunged into the laver by the Spirit, doth by faith spread out itself therein; as one who having jumped into the water to swim, doth immediately spread out his body in it, and embrace the water as it were. Christ having apprehended the unclean soul by his Spirit, and united it passively to himself; the soul again apprehends him by faith, and actively unites with him. And hereby faith brings in the

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first application of his blood, the effect of which is habitual sanctification.

2dly, The soul cleaveth to Christ, and abideth in him, all along till death : *Heb. x. 39. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them, that believe, to the saving of the soul.* It is never extinguished again in the soul ; though its gripe may be sometime slack'd, yet it never lets it quite go : *Luke xxii. 32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Hereby it brings in the continued application, for progressive sanctification, *John xv. 5.* And the stronger its gripes are at any time, the more plentiful application is there of the blood of Christ to the soul ; as the stronger the child sucks, he draws out the more milk, *Jf. lxvi. 11.* Hence he that has the strongest faith, hath the holiest heart and life.

3dly, The soul cleaveth to Christ in death. When the body is falling down, the man still cleaves to and abides in Christ, and so dying in faith, dies in the Lord, *Heb. xi. 13. Rev. xiv. 13.* Faith keeps the gripe of Christ, while the soul is losing gripe of the body ; and as the body drops off, it brings in a full application of Christ's blood, which perfects sanctification. So the soul drops the remains of sin together with the body.

Now, the instrumental efficacy of faith for the washing of the soul, lies in trust : and as it trusts, it purifies ; for therein lies its nature, and therefore its efficacy comes that way, *Psal. xxxi. 19. Psal. xxxvii. 40.* And the object of that trust is twofold.

(1.) The object of this trust is *real*, viz. the word. Faith trusts or believes the word as firm and infallible truth. Hence the Apostle, *2 Theff. ii. 13.* speaks of the *belief of the truth*. Faith trusts or believes particularly the word of the promise of the gospel, holding out to sinners the benefit of sanctification as well as other benefits, *2 Cor. vii. 1.* ; such as that promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* This trust of the word of the gospel is our original obedience to the truth, *1 Pet. i. 22.* wherein the soul subjects itself wholly to the truth of God in his word, believing it over the belly of all objections in this point, saying, as *Mic. vii. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us : he will subdue our iniquities : and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

(2.) The

(2.) The object of this trust is *personal*, viz. Christ himself. The soul trusts on Christ for the washing of it. Hence is that invitation, *If. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.* And hence is the language of faith, *Psal. lxxv. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* It is the very nature of faith, to renounce all confidence in other things, and to trust in him alone for the washing of the soul. Hence Paul saith, *Philip. iii. 3. We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* In the word of promise he is held forth as *the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world*, as made sanctification to us: and faith is a trust or reliance on him as such to us, *John i. 12.* But more particularly,

Faith's trust on Christ is on him as crucified. Hence the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. ii. 2. I determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* While we look on him simply as God, we see his justice flaming against sin, and barring all sanctifying influences: *Heb. xii. 29. For our God is a consuming fire.* But looking on him as God-man, by his obedience and death making satisfaction for sin, we have a fit object of trust for our sanctification: for there we see a fulness of merit for purging away of sin, *Rom. vi. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Hence faith has a particular eye to the blood of Christ, in the point of sanctification, as well as justification. Hence the Apostle saith, *Rom. iii. 25. God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.* And again, *Heb. ix. 14. The blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God:* that being the immediate cause of our washing, as the blood of his sacrifice offered to God for atonement, and sprinkled on us for our purification, *Heb. xii. 24.*

Now, this trust for washing, placed on Christ crucified held forth to us in the word of promise, which is that wherein the efficacy of faith for sanctifying us instrumentally lies, may be taken up in these four things.

1.] The soul's turning its eye of expectation of purification, from off all things else, and fixing it on Christ crucified.

fied. Hence is the gospel-invitation, *If. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.* *Heb. Face unto me.* Secure sinners, being indifferent about holiness, look no where for it; they desire it not. Awakened sinners look for it to physicians of no value, such as their own endeavours, resolutions, &c. But faith looks off from all creatures, means, &c. unto Christ alone, for it, as the woman with the bloody issue did, *Mark. v. 25.—28.* that virtue may come from him for purifying.

2.] Applying the promise of spiritual washing to itself: *2 Cor. vii. 1. Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* The word holds forth the promise of cleansing from sin, to sinners indefinitely, saying, as *Ezek. xxxvi. 25. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* Faith catches hold of it, and brings it home, saying, as *Psal. lxxv. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.* *Mic. vii. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.* It pleads the promise, and hangs by it. Particularly, it appropriates the privilege of legal freedom, *Rom. vi. 10. 11. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord:* so that thereby the soul looks on itself as dead in point of right and privilege to sin, *Rom. vi. 2. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

3.] Relying on the merit of Christ for the out-making of the promise of sanctification, saying, as *Psal. li. 7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* Compared with *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* The soul sees it is a great privilege as well as a duty, and looks that God will make it holy, for Christ's sake, forasmuch as he died for that very end, *Tit. ii. 14. For true faith has the same reliance on Christ for sanctification as for justification, knowing that the one is the purchase of the Redeemer's blood, even as the other.*

4.] lastly, Acquiescing in the faithfulness of God in his word, for that effect. Faith receives the word of promise
for

for sanctification; and says, with *Mary*, Luke i. 38. *Be it unto me according to thy word.* The purification of the soul from sin has so many difficulties about it, that the sinner truly sensible accounts it impossible in respect of all created power: but since God has said, that he will do it, the soul acquiesces in his word, judging him faithful who hath promised, *Rom. iv. 24. Heb. xi. 11.*

This faith or trust purifies from sin, according to the scripture, and the experience of the saints: *Acts xv. 9. Purifying their hearts by faith.* Hereto agrees the Psalmist's experience, *Psal. xxviii. 7. The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my song will I praise him.* And so does that of those to whom *Peter* wrote, and of whom he says, *1 epist. i. 22. Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.* Yea, by this trust, joy is brought into the soul, as *vers. 8. 9. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Rom. xv. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.* And that presupposeth the purging of the soul from sin, *Is. xxxiii. 24. The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.*

Quest. How has that trust that efficacy? *Ans.* By the appointment of God. How had the looking to the brazen serpent such efficacy as to cure the stung *Israelites*, but by God's appointment? So is the case here: *John iii. 14. 15. 16. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* The nature and efficacy of saving faith may be learned in part from that of the faith of miracles, they agreeing in one general kind. *Matth. ix. 28. 29. 30. Jesus saith unto the blind men, Believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.* God has made choice of faith or trust for that end, and given it a word of appointment, *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, shall be saved.* And the appointment is, that on the soul's so trusting in Christ, the soul shall be

sanctified by the Spirit with the blood, *Gal. iii. 2.* And there is a fitness in the appointment of this as a mean : for,

(1.) Faith trusts the word of God, and the faithfulness of God requires that it be accomplished to them that trust it. So it is secured, *Rom. ix. 33. Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.* If you would have a benefit from an honest man, you cannot take a more effectual way to obtain it, than having got his word for it, to trust it, plead it, and hold him to it.

(2.) Christ himself with all his benefits, comes to us in the word. Hence the Apostle saith, *Rom. x. 6. 7. 8. The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above); or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead): but what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach.* Trusting the word is the only habile way of receiving it farther than into the ears, at least as it is a promise. So receiving the word by faith, we receive Christ, and consequently the purifying virtue of his blood that is in it, with himself. Hence the Apostle saith of the *Theſſalonians*, *1 epist. ii. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* And then,

(3.) There is nothing so adapted to the end of glorifying free grace, as this trust of faith is; and that is the great end of the gospel: *Rom. iv. 16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.*

I shall shut up this branch with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. It is not true faith that leaves the soul still unholy, lying in the filth of sin. Unwashed sinners are unbelievers certainly: *Tit. i. 15. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* In vain will ye please yourselves with a conceit of your believing in Christ, while your pretended faith brings in no sanctifying influences into your souls: *James ii. 14. What doth it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?* True faith, according to the scripture, hath a double effect.

1st, Within,

1st, Within, faith purifies the heart, *Acts* xv. 9. and makes it evangelically clean, *Psal.* xxiv. 3. 4. It breaks the reigning power of lusts within, maintains a combat against their broken forces, sets the soul to approve itself to God in the inner man, where no eye sees, and longs for and presseth toward perfection.

2^{dly}, Without, faith works by love, in all duties of piety towards God, and justice and mercy towards our neighbour: *Gal.* v. 6. *For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* It is a principle within, that casts abroad its cleansing efficacy into the life, purifying mens words and actions.

Inf. 2. Then whosoever are really washed from their sins, as they will be sure to use all means of holiness, yet they will be carried beyond them all to Christ for it. They will be conscientious in the practice of holy duties, and so go beyond the profane and careless; and yet they will not rest in them, but quit them all in point of confidence when they have done, and so go beyond hypocrites: *For* (saith the Apostle, *Philip.* iii. 3.) *we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* This is the little further that the spouse went, *Cant.* iii. 4. and so found her beloved.

Inf. 3. lastly, The only true way to be holy, is to believe in Christ. This is the way that all the members of Christ are sanctified; they are sanctified *in him*, *1 Cor.* i. 2. *through faith*, *Acts* xxvi. 18. And there is no true holiness in subjects capable of faith, without it: for faith Christ, *John* xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* So if the soul be brought to faith in Christ, it will undoubtedly be made holy: if it be not, all other means of washing of a person will be but washing a blackmoor, that will never become white for them all.

Thus far of those things which Christ useth more immediately for washing of sinners.

SECONDLY, There are other means which Christ useth for that purpose, more mediately: of which briefly.

First, Christ washeth sinners by the word, *Eph.* v. 26. Hence Christ saith of his disciples, *John* xv. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* And hence he prays to his Father, *John* xvii. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* The word written, read, and preached, is the great external mean of washing of sinners; and is effectual for that end by the energy of the Spirit, being received by faith. The use of the word

to the washing of the sinner lies in these things following.

1. It is the glass wherein the filthy sinner discerns his spots and filthiness. The word of the law particularly is that glass : *Rom. iii. 20. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.* It represents to men the sinfulness of their nature, hearts, and lives : and when Christ comes to wash a sinner, he holds that glass to his eyes to convince him of sin, by the Spirit. Therefore the Psalmist recommends it, to young men, *Psal. cxix. 9. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.* And they that look not into the word for this end, care not for washing.

2. It is a spur to washing, an external impulsive cause, by the strong motives whereby it presseth the sinner to wash. Here the law presseth him by its threatenings and curses against the unclean ; the gospel presseth with the possibility, excellency, and unspeakable advantage of washing.

3. It is the key that sets open the fountain for washing in, *Zech. xiii. 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.* It is opened by the preaching of the gospel ; which shews sinners, that whatever be their pollution, they are welcome to it. The voice of Christ in the gospel is, *Behold me, Is. lxxv. 1. i. e. "Here I am."* Thereby our Lord unlocks his treasures, laying them open to the view of sinners.

4. It is the vehicle of the blood and Spirit of Christ, whereby sinners may be washed, receiving the word by faith, *Rom. x. 6. 7. 8. forecited. John vi. 63. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* The gospel is therefore called *the ministration of the Spirit, and righteousness*, *2 Cor. iii.* inasmuch as thereby Christ communicates his Spirit to sinners, and brings righteousness to them. Hence receiving the word by faith, the soul is cast into the mould of it, *Rom. vi. 17. ;* for it is *able to save the soul*, *Jam. i. 21. and works effectually in it*, *1 Thess. ii. 13. to the cleansing of the soul, John xv. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.*

I shall shut up this branch also with a few inferences.

Inf. 1. Saints and sinners need the word ; forasmuch as they are both defiled, and need washing ; the one washing to be begun on them, and the other to be carried on. And they that can live contented without it, are content to lie still

still in their filthiness; and will need no more to ruin them, but to get their will.

Inf. 2. They that have an enmity at the word, appearing in their aversion to dip into it, and neglect of it, are neither washed, nor desire to be washed: *Job xxi. 14. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The reason of their enmity against it, is their love to their lusts, to which it is an enemy: as, on the contrary, they whose hearts are turned against sin, are turned towards the word, as a mean for purging it away: *John iii. 20. 21. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

Inf. 3. Their soul's case is very hopeless, who get no good of the word: and these are all such who get no conviction by it, or are not stirred up by it to seek to be purged from their filthiness, who are not pointed to Christ as the only laver, and never partake of his blood and Spirit, by it. These are they on whom the great mean of washing from sin is ineffectual; of whom the Lord may justly say, as *Ezek. xxiv. 13. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.*

Inf. 4. Lastly, They do not believe the word, who are not cleansed in heart and life thereby; for (as the Apostle saith of the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thess. ii. 13.*) *when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* If the word were received by faith, it could not miss to be sanctifying: but beholding the unholiness of men, we may cry out, as *Is. liii. 1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* The word preached is not truly believed, therefore it brings not forth fruit.

Secondly, Christ washeth sinners by the sacraments, *Eph. v. 26.* Hence baptism is said to save us, 1 *Pet. iii. 21.* The sacraments are external means of spiritual washing, and are made effectual by the Spirit, being received by faith; but no otherwise in subjects capable of believing; for God hath not communicated the virtue of sanctifying to the

the elements, as to natural causes which work necessarily,
1 Pet. lii. 21.

The use of the sacraments to the washing of sinners lies here.

1. The sacraments point out to us the laver wherein we may be washed, as being representing signs of Christ with his sanctifying blood. Hence the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* They set the laver as it were before our eyes, and call us to think of it, and our need thereof. Therein Christ is as it were crucified before our eye, his blood springing forth for our washing.

2. The sacraments confirm our right in it, and our welcome to it, as seals. Hence the Apostle saith concerning Abraham, Rom. iv. 11. *He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.* The blood of Christ is most precious; but there is a grant of it made to us in the word, which is our charter, and the sacraments seal it. The word says, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life:* the sacraments seal it, that so we may be excited and encouraged to come boldly, and make use of it for our sanctification.

3. The sacraments present, exhibit, and apply it to us who believe, 1 Cor. xi. 24. As by earth and stone delivered to a man upon a legal right, he is infect and possessed of the house or land: so, by the sacraments received by faith, Christ and all his benefits are applied to us, for our cleansing.

An inference shall shut up this branch.

Inf. Hence we may try, whether the sacraments be effectual to us, or not; whether we have believingly received them or not. While people are never the more holy, for all the sacraments they receive, the more the worse, their disease is the more confirmed, their filthiness is the more fixed on them. But when they stir up the soul to an use-making of Christ for sanctification, and men get a cubit added to their spiritual stature, it is a good sign.

Thirdly, and Lastly, Christ washeth sinners by afflictions. Hence the Prophet saith, Is. xxvii. 9. *By this therefore shall*
the

the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin. They also are but external means, in the hand of the Spirit, and cannot of themselves purify. But the Spirit makes use of them for cleansing of sinners. There are two ways of purging filthiness, by water, and by fire; as we learn from *Is. iv. 4.* *When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.* Afflictions are God's fire for that end. Their use in the washing is sixfold.

1. Afflictions are memorials of our sin, and so put us in mind to look back on our defilements; as they were to Joseph's brethren, when they said, as *Gen. xlii. 21.* *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.* The prosperous sinner wallows at ease in his filthiness; but when God lays his afflicting hand on him, the sharper it is, conscience is readily the more awakened out of its sleep. And it will readily read the sin, out of the punishment.

2. Afflictions are a glass, wherein one sees the loathsomeness of sin in the sight of God. While the sinner prospers in his course, he cannot think that God is sore displeased at it; as the Lord himself saith unto the sinner, *Psal. i. 21.* *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.* But affliction is such a token of God's displeasure against sin, that when it comes, the sinner alters his thoughts; sees it loathsome before God, and therefore loathsome in itself; which makes him anxious to be washed.

3. Afflictions are a fire that melt the paint and fairing off the defiling objects in the world. Hence saith the Lord unto Israel, *Jer. ii. 36. 37.* *Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.* Where was the excellency of the thirty pieces when God's hand was lifted up against Judas for them? The beauty of former lusts melts away, when a man is laid on a sick-bed: and the bewitching creature then loses all its charms.

4. Afflictions are a bridle whereby men are restrained from defiling themselves more, and are brought to a stand

in a defiling course. Hence the Lord saith unto *Israel*, *Hof. ii. 6. Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.* They serve to take off the edge of corrupt affections, and make them to languish; whereby the sinner becomes more considerate, and pliable to counsel from the word.

5. Afflictions are occasional causes of sinners thinking of, and going to the fountain to wash. Hence the Lord saith of *Israel*, *Hof. v. 15. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.* How many are there to whom afflictions have been the blessed means and occasions of their turning serious? Such a rod they met with, or they had gone on like the wild ass upon the mountains, snuffing up the wind.

6. Lastly, Afflictions are a sharp wind to blow up the fire of grace where it is, and particularly to excite faith, whereby the soul is washed. Hence the spouse prayeth, *Cant. iv. 16. Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* In prosperity people can fetch in their comfort by sense; but in affliction, when created streams are dried up, they must fetch it in by faith, or else want it.

Two inferences shall conclude this branch.

Inf. 1. Let this cause us take afflictions kindly; since they are means by which Christ washeth us. Though the water be cold and piercing, yet we endure it, that we may get our hands made clean. Though medicines sicken us, we blame not the physician, because they are for our health. Why should we be angry at our God afflicting us, since the fruit designed is to purge away sin?

Inf. 2. Let us, in all our afflictions, seek purification from our sin, and know they are not effectual unless they have a sanctifying efficacy on us. They are indeed of the nature of fire, first causing the scum to come above, but next throwing it off. They do discover much of the corruption of the heart, that otherwise would be latent: but then if they humble the soul under a sense of sinfulness, and send it anew to Christ for purging of the nature, they are not in vain.

I shall now proceed to the second general head proposed, namely,

II. To

II. To consider the unwashed or unsanctified sinner's having no part with Christ.

In discussing this head, I shall shew,

1. What the unwashed sinner's having no part with Christ supposeth; and,

2. Wherein it lies.

FIRST, We shall shew what the unwashed sinner's having no part with Christ supposeth. It supposeth,

1. That Christ himself is happy. He is not only happy as he is God, *Rom. ix. 5.* who is therefore styled *God blessed for ever*; but as he is Mediator, the head of the body, the church. Hence it is said of him, *Psal. lxxii. 17. Men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed.* All mankind were brought to misery and ruin by *Adam's fall*: but the man Christ was an exception from that rule. He was happy from the moment of the incarnation, all along, notwithstanding what he suffered: and from his resurrection and ascension his happiness was completed: *Philip. ii. 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.* *Heb. x. 13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.* There are two things wherein Christ is completely happy.

1st, In having fully done the work he undertook to do. Hence he says to his Father, *John xvii. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* He had a great work to do, for the glory of his Father, and the salvation of sinners. It was the hardest work that ever was taken in hand. All hardships from heaven, earth, and hell, met together upon him; and his work was to go through them all in a course of perfect obedience. And now it is done; he was born holy, lived righteous, satisfied completely by his death: now he is got to the joy set before him: *Rom. vi. 9. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.* *Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

2dly, In having received the reward of his work. Our Lord, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, *Heb. xii. 2.* Never was there such a reward of work, as Christ has received; it bears proportion to the work, which was of infinite value. All the promises of the covenant, whether respecting himself, or his people, are

now in his hand. They are won by him, and he is put in possession of the things promised, which make an inexhaustible treasure. Hence the Apostle (*Eph. iii. 8.*) speaks of the *unsearchable riches of Christ*.

2. There is enough in him to make others happy too : *Col. i. 19. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* There is a fulness of a fountain in him, whereby others may be supplied from him, may have part with him, and yet he have no lack. The first *Adam* was a spring of ruin to all his posterity : but the gospel points out Christ the Second *Adam* as a spring of happiness for wretched sinners.

3. Sinners may have part with Christ in his fulness ; it is lodged in him to be communicated. Hence our Lord himself says, *Matth. xi. 27. 28. All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son but the Father : neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* He is the bowl on the top of the candlestick, (*Zech. iv. 2.*), the immediate receptacle of the oil, from whence it is conveyed to the seven lamps. *Joseph* was sent to *Egypt*, and exalted there, to provide for *Jacob's* family in the dearth : so Christ is great Steward of heaven, for the behoof of poor sinners ; that he having all in his hand, they may be happy in having part with him.

4. All that are sanctified are happy in having part with Christ : *Col. ii. 9. 10. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.* They have part in his work, by imputation ; even as they had part with *Adam* in his sin : *Rom. v. 19. For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners : so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.* They have part in his reward, by a real communication thereof to them ; even as they had part with *Adam* in the corruption of his nature : *John i. 16. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. 1 Cor. xv. 22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* This, it is true, is but imperfect as yet ; but it is so begun that it will undoubtedly be perfected. But such as it is, their sanctification is not the cause of it, but it is the cause of their sanctification. This appears from *1 John i. 3. 7. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with*

with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

5. Lastly, Unholy sinners are miserable in the want of part with Christ. They are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. Therefore this struck Peter, when he saw how deep it drew: for he said, Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. It is true, all that hear the gospel are externally called to the fellowship of his Son: but most men love the fellowship of the world lying in wickedness, and will not take part with Christ. So they are without it, though it lies open to them: and to each one of them may be said, what Peter said to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Mean while their unholiness is not the thing that bars them from having part with Christ; but their want of part with Christ is that whereby they keep themselves unholy.

SECONDLY, I shall show wherein the unwashed sinner's having no part with Christ does lie or consist. This will appear, with the misery of the case, in taking a view, 1. Of Christ's work; and, 2. Of his reward; in neither of which the unholy have part with him.

FIRST, Christ is happy, in that he has done out the work he undertook for the salvation of sinners; and all that are his have part with him therein; it is imputed to them, as if they had done it, Gal. ii. 20. And,

1. He has been born holy, and answered the demand of the law for holiness of nature, by his bringing a holy human nature into the world with him, as a public person. Hence in Luke i. 35. he is called *that holy thing born*. Heb. vii. 26. *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners*. So that demand of the law for salvation for all that are his, is answered; for in Col. ii. 10. 11. they are said to be *complete in him*; and to be *circumcised in him*. The law cannot stop their salvation for want of a perfectly holy nature; for they have

part with him, in the holiness of his nature, and that holy nature is communicated to them *.

But unholy sinners have no part with Christ in this matter: the holiness of Christ's nature is not imputed to them, or reckoned theirs. There is a holy birth of the *Second Adam*, to take away the guilt of sin that we are born in: but such as are not washed by Christ from their sin, have no share in it.

The evidence of this is, that whosoever have part in the holiness of Christ's birth by imputation, are really born again in their own persons: because Christ's holy birth is the efficient meritorious cause of the new birth of his members. Hence the Apostle saith, 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.* Col. ii. 11. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.* Now, the unholy are not born again; therefore they have no part with Christ in his holy birth: and so they have nothing to answer the law's demand for holiness of nature.

2. Christ has lived a righteous life, in perfect obedience to the law's commands: *Philip. ii. 8: He became obedient unto death.* He did it as a public person: and all his have part with him in it; they obeyed in Christ, as they sinned in Adam, *Rom. viii. 3. 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Hence are these epithets of the church, *undefiled, without spot, complete in him.* So the law's demand of obedience as the condition of life, is answered as to them: their part in Christ's obedience answers it fully *.

But the unholy have no part with Christ in the obedience of his life. For Christ's obedience being meritorious of our sanctification, the want of the latter is a plain evidence of no part in the former; and that upon the ground of justice, which requires the delivering of the thing purchased, upon the application of the price, *Rom. viii. 1. — 4.* If ye have obeyed legally in Christ, ye obey really in your own persons;

* See View of the covenant of grace from the sacred records, head 3. concerning the conditional part of the covenant.

* See View of the covenant of grace, head 3. *ut supra.*

for Christ's obedience hath a conforming virtue, in those to whom it is imputed, *Rom. viii. 29.* For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. 1 *John ii. 6.* He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Inherent righteousness necessarily follows imputed righteousness. An unholy life argues no part in the holiness of Christ's life: therefore there is a bar between heaven and the unholy.

3. He has suffered, to the full satisfaction of the law in its threatening and curse for sin, *Philip. ii. 8.* He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Gal. iii. 13.* Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. And Christ suffering as a public person, all that are his suffered in him, having part with him in his sufferings. They were legally crucified with him, *Gal. ii. 20.* died with him, *Rom. vi. 10. 11.* and were buried with him, *Col. ii. 12.* So the law's demand of satisfaction is answered for them, since they have part with Christ *.

But the unholy have no part with Christ in his sufferings. An undeniable evidence whereof is their not being conformed to him in his death, *Philip. iii. 10.* The death of Christ will infallibly prove the death of sin, when one has part with Christ in it; *Rom. vi. 6.* Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. *Gal. v. 24.* They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. As sure as Christ died for the sins of the elect, they will die to sin that have communion with him in it: for as death made its way from the members to the head, till it laid him in the grave; so the merit of his death will make its way from the head to them to their sanctification. So that demand of the law lies on their heads unanswered.

4. He has brought in everlasting righteousness. In what he was, did, and suffered, he fully satisfied what the law had to demand, coming up, as a public person, to an exact conformity thereto. This is the righteousness he has wrought, sufficient to cover every sinner in the sight of God, and to render him accepted as righteous. All that are his have part with him in it, *Psal. xlv. 13.* *Cant. vi. 10.* *Rev. iii. 18.* So they have a righteousness that is law-biding.

* See View of the covenant of grace, head 3. *ut supra.*

But the unholy have no part with him in it. For where ever righteousness imputed is on any man, inherent holiness is in him. By the former satisfying the law, the strength of sin is taken away: so that the man cannot be living in sin as formerly. Hence the Apostle saith, *Rom. vi. 2. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

SECONDLY, Christ has received the reward of his work; and so he has an inexhaustible treasure: and all that are his have part with him in it.

1. Christ is risen again from the dead. By the authority of the Father he is discharged from the grave; death is never to seize him more: *Acts ii. 24. God raised him up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* And all his have part with him in his resurrection: *Eph. ii. 6. God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:* soasmuch as he rose as a public person. But the unholy have no part with him in his resurrection. For,

1st, They are still dead in their sins, while they live in them. Where is their part then in Christ's resurrection? They that have part with him are risen with him, risen by virtue of his resurrection, the power of the resurrection of the head raising the members from death in sin, *Col. ii. 12.* and *iii. 1.* Alas! the grave-cloaths of the sins of the flesh, which ye are not putting off, but keeping on, and the ties whereof are still as fast upon you as ever, speak you destitute of any part with Christ in this matter.

2^{dly}, They are still members of the congregation of the dead, *Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3.* When our Lord rose, he left the congregation of the dead in their graves; yea, he conversed not with the world thereafter, as before his death. And so, whenever a soul gets part with Christ, it leaves the world lying in wickedness, comes out from among them, and walks no more according to the course of this world. Hence the Apostle saith, *Rom. vi. 4. 5. We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* What shadow of ground have they then to pretend to a part with him, that are not walking in newness of life, but just according to the course of the world.

2. Christ is now ascended up into glory, where he sits at
the

the Father's right hand, *Mark xvi. 19.* He ascended into it, as a public person, to take possession of it for us, *Heb. vi. 20.* And all his have part with him in it, as the members of the glory of the head: *Eph. ii. 6. God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

But the unholy have no part with him in it. For,

1st, They are yet lying in the filth of their natural state, through original and actual sin, *Psal. xiv. 3.*; all over defiled, *Tit. i. 15.* They may have worldly glory, outside-glory, such as ariseth from bravery, wealth, and honour; yea they may glory in wickedness, that is really their shame. But there is no heavenly glory on any, but by sanctifying grace, *2 Cor. iii. 18.*; that only makes a glorious inside, *Psal. xlv. 13.* in so far as thereby the purity of the divine image is on the soul.

2^{dly}, Neither is their heart there, nor are they making forward to it. Our Lord tells us, *Matth. vi. 21.* that *where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.* And therefore the Apostle urges, *Col. iii. 1. 2.* to seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; to set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. What part then have they with Christ in his glory, whose affections are not on things above, but on the earth, *Phil. iii. 19. who mind earthly things?* They carry themselves as natives of the world, not as pilgrims in it. Their great aim is, to compass designs of worldly profits and pleasures, but not to be fitted for glory, *1 John iii. 3.*

3. Christ has the Spirit of life and holiness dwelling in him, as the head of his body mystical. So the Spirit of life is in him, to be communicated; and it is the purchase of his death, *Rev. iii. 1. He hath the seven Spirits*; seven Spirits, answerable to the seven golden candlesticks; enough to quicken and actuate them all. Hence he is said to quicken, *John v. 21. 26.* And all his have part with him therein, *Philip. ii. 1.* The same Spirit that is in the head, is in the members too, in so much that *the Spirit of God dwells in them*; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

But the unholy have no part with him in his Spirit. For,

1st, He is the holy Spirit, *the Spirit of holiness*, *Rom. i. 4.*; so called not only from the work of sanctification a-

scribed peculiarly to him, but from the holiness of his nature, in opposition to the unclean spirit, *Mark iii. 29. 30.* to attest all the works of God without himself, whereof he is the immediate worker, to be holy. So that in whomsoever he dwells, and actuates, they must needs be made holy : *Rom. viii. 2. For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made them free from the law of sin and death.* Since then the unholy are under the law of sin as the subjects thereof, and under the law of spiritual death, they have no part with Christ.

2dly, They have the spirit of the world in them, conforming them to the world, in their frame of heart, way, and walk, *1 John iv. 4.* It is an unclean, unholy spirit, whereby they cannot relish nor savour the holy things of God; but things that are fleshly, sensual, carnal, and earthly, *Jude vers. 19.*; not without a secret enmity at true holiness, *Rom. viii. 7.* and cannot hold on in the way of God, as *Caleb* did, *Num. xiv. 24.*

3dly, They live in the state wherein *Adam* left them, without a saving change. *1 Cor. xv. 45. Adam* was made a living soul, but *Christ* a quickening spirit. What men derive from *Adam*, they have; a natural life, a life of reason, gifts of knowledge, &c. But what men derive from *Christ*, they have not; they are not quickened by him with the Spirit of life unto God. But if they had part with *Christ*, they would be spiritually quickened souls; as sure as having part with *Adam*, they are living souls.

4. There is a fulness of grace in the man *Christ*: *Col. i. 19. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* *John i. 14. The Word was full of grace and truth.* Grace is given him without measure, *John iii. 4.*; and all that are his partake with him in it, it being in him as in the storehouse; it is so poured on him as the head, that it runs down to the skirts of his garments, *John i. 16.*

But the unholy have no part with him in his grace. For,

1st, They are not partakers of the divine nature, that new nature which is derived from *Christ*, by the communication of grace from him by the Spirit into his mystical members, whereby they escape the corruption of the world, *2 Pet. i. 4.* Instead of that, the old nature reigns in them, which is enmity against God, and serious religion. The old man with his deeds is still in his vigour, has not yet got his deadly wound.

2dly, Whatever

2dly, Whatever good or grace may seem to be in them, it is but in some one or few particulars. There are still several black butts in their religion; they never make thorough work of it, *Psal. cxix. 6.* They have not respect unto all God's commandments. For they are never made new creatures; though some things, yet never are all things become new with them: An evidence that they have no part in the grace of Christ; for then should they have grace for grace.

3dly, Hence they do not bear Christ's image: they are not like him, in the set of their spirit, and tenor of their walk: *1 John ii. 6.* For he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. They look like the old Adam, sinful, sensual, and averse from God. But O how unlike the holy crucified Jesus, and how quite unconcerned to be like him, their own consciences bear witness. But the having part with Christ makes a person like him.

5. Lastly, Christ is anointed of the Father with the Spirit to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. Hence he says himself, *Is. lxi. 1.* The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. And the Apostle Peter saith, *Acts x. 38.* that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him. This is the honour put on him, to bear these offices, signified by his names *Messias* and *Christ*, i. e. anointed. And as he is *Christ*, all that are his are *Christians*, anointed with the same Spirit, *Psal. xlv. 7.* having part with him in his offices.

1st, Christ is a Prophet: and all that are his, have part with him in his prophetic office, are prophets too, *Psal. cv. 15.* They are let into the knowledge of the things of God by the Spirit. Hence the Apostle saith, *1 John ii. 20. 27.* But ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things. But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you: But, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie: and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. They are on the secret of heaven: For (*Psal. xxv. 14.*) the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him:

and he will shew them his covenant. Matth. xi. 25. And they teach them to others too, though they cannot make them effectual. Hence David saith, *Psal. li. 13. I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* Not only ministers, but every true Christian has this office; the former in a public, the latter in a private capacity, *Philip. ii. 15. 16.*

But the unholy have no part with him in his prophetic office.

(1.) They are not illuminated by the Spirit of holiness, savingly to know the things of God, *1 Cor. ii. 12. 14.* They may be taught by men, but are not taught of God: they may know the literal sense of the words of the gospel; but the things thereof, in their suitableness to the divine perfections and sinners case, are hid from them, *Matth. xi. 25.* They never get into the secret of religion.

(2.) Neither do they by the Spirit of holiness enlighten the world. Being dark themselves, they darken the world by their ungodly, profane, or formal lives. Most of them see no tie on them to be their brother's keeper. Such as teach others the things of God, do it by a gift, for their own glory; not by the Spirit, out of love to Christ and his glory. So they have no part with him in his prophetic office.

2dly, He is a Priest; and all his have part with him in that venerable office. They are priests too, *1 Pet. ii. 9. a royal priesthood; Rev. i. 6. priests unto God.* They are consecrated to God to serve him in his spiritual temple, in their robes of Christ's imputed righteousness and inherent holiness. They offer sacrifices of thanksgiving unto God, which are accepted of God through Christ, their only altar. They offer to him themselves, *Rom. xii. 1.* their service to him in acts of worship and duty, *Heb. xiii. 15. Acts x. 4.* and in suffering or bearing the cross, *Philip. ii. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 6.*

But the unholy have no part with Christ in his priestly office.

(1.) They are not of the line, not descended from our great High Priest, as born of his Spirit. They were never truly consecrated, or made holy persons; they are destitute of imputed and implanted righteousness: they are wholly polluted and defiled, as being of the world lying in wickedness: so if they pretend to the spiritual priesthood, they will be, as polluted, put from it.

(2.) They

(2.) They do not, nor cannot offer acceptable sacrifices to God. They never offer themselves to God as a sacrifice, but to the world and their lusts. If they offer prayers or other services to him, they never offer them on the right altar, Christ. Hence they, and all they do, even their best things, are an abomination, *Prov. xxviii. 9.*

Lastly, Christ is a King: and all his have part with him in that honourable office. They are *kings* too, *Rev. i. 6. Kings unto God.* They have the right of dominion over their spiritual enemies, the rule of their own spirits governing themselves by the laws of Christ, and the lordship of the world, *Rom. iv. 13.*; and they are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. They do not yet peaceably possess their kingdom; the rebels and their open enemies are making constant wars against them: but they do overcome, and are *more than conquerors, through him that loved them*, *1 John iv. 4. Rom. viii. 37.*

But the unholy have no part with Christ in his kingly office.

They are servants and slaves to sin and Satan, *Rom. vi. 16.* They are under the power of Satan, *Acts xxvi. 18.*; led captive at his will, *2 Tim. ii. 26.* They have no gracious management of their own spirits, *Prov. xxv. 28.* They are the servants of corruption; they can neither think nor do any service acceptable to God.

THE APPLICATION.

I shut up all with some practical *Inferences.*

Inf. 1. Holiness is absolutely necessary to happiness: For (*Heb. xii. 14.*) *without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* Ye may be either poor or rich, sick or whole, and yet be happy. But if ye be not holy, ye are miserable; for ye have no part with Christ. And (*Acts iv. 12.*) *there is no salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* It is astonishing to think, how easy many that hear the gospel, are about holiness; they are in no concern whether they be holy or not. They would not have people to take them for saints; nay, holy people are a jest with them. There is no accounting for this any other way but that holiness is rare in the world, and they have no mind to be singular, nor to distinguish themselves from *the world lying in wickedness.*

But consider these four things.

1. God is holy. The God that made you is holy by necessity of nature ; he is so holy that he cannot be but holy. If God is necessarily holy, he cannot but hate unholiness ; because he cannot but love his own image, and hate what is contrary to his nature : therefore he cannot but hate your unholiness, and for it hate you who are unholy. And what we hate as contrary to our nature, we seek to destroy. Now, consider the misery of being objects of God's hatred and aversion, and what makes you so ; and ye will see the necessity of your being holy, *1 Pet. i. 16. Be ye holy, (saith the Lord), for I am holy.*

2. Christ our Saviour is holy. As he is God, he is *the holy One of Israel* ; as he is man, he is *that holy thing*, *Luke i. 35.* Jesus is called *the holy One* ; the very devils owned him to be so, *Mark i. 24.* The very end of his being *Jesus*, was to make men holy, *Matth. i. 21. Thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.* He came to *destroy the works of the devil*, he died to redeem sinners from their sins, *Tit. ii. 14.* What part then can ye possibly imagine yourselves to have in him, while ye continue unholy ?

3. The body of Christ is holy ; they that belong to him, the company of the saved, *Eph. v. 25. 26.* The devil is *the god of this world* ; his subjects are *the world lying in wickedness.* Out of them Christ raises his kingdom, and his subjects are all holy, *Gal. iv. 4. Rev. xix. 14.* It is their distinguishing badge from those that belong to Satan, that agrees to them all, and to them only, *2 Tim. ii. 19.* So that if ye are not holy, ye belong not to Christ, but to Satan.

4. Heaven is holy ; it is a holy state, a holy place, where no unholy thing can enter, *Rev. xxi. 27.* As to the dogs and swine, their place will be without, *Rev. xxii. 15.* that is, the unholy, who *go with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire*, shall be cast out from the supper of the saints in glory into outer darkness, *Matth. viii. 12.*

Inf. 2. There is no true holiness, but in communion with Christ. Men may have a shew and semblance of holiness, without union and communion with Christ. But real holiness acceptable to God, no man attains but in Christ, being sanctified only with his blood, by his Spirit, through faith ; made new creatures after his image, by participation

of the all-fulness of grace in him, as at large declared, 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. ii. 10. 1 Pet. i. 2. Acts xxvi. 18.

And therefore holiness is quite another thing, than,

1. *Common civility*. A man may be civil, not rude, but courteous, discreet, and obliging in his conversation; and yet be a stranger to holiness. This was the case of the young man, of whom, *when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*, Mark xii. 34. There are some rude persons that bear the devil's mark on their foreheads, who behave themselves neither according to the rules of grace nor good manners: some professors that affect and pride themselves in rudeness, regarding no body, nor their offence, but only to please themselves. Such would do well to consider, whether that be consistent with real holiness or not. The reason of the doubt, is the second great command of the law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Howbeit, civility is not holiness, though a part of the matter of it.

2. *Morality*, whether we understand by it common honesty in dealings in the world; or a conformity to the letter of the law, which makes a blameless outward conversation, and goes under the name of *moral virtue*, but has no relation to Christ and his Spirit. Men may have all this, and not be holy; as had the *Pharisee*, Luke xviii. 11. who *stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican*. This was also the case of *Paul*, Philip. iii. 6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless*. These fruits are in many like the apples of Sodom, which are fair to look at, but when handled fall to ashes.

3. *A form of godliness*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. There may be the going the round of the external duties of religion, where there is no holiness: for these may be done by them that are without Christ, Luke xviii. 12. *Matth. v. 20. If. lviii. 2. 3.*; though many place all their religion in these things, as if they pray, communicate, &c. to be concerned no more to be holy.

All these differ from true holiness,

1st, In the original and spring of them. True holiness springs from union with Christ, the Spirit applying the blood of Christ to the soul, received by faith, improving the word, sacraments, and afflictions. The Spirit is the efficient cause, the blood the meritorious cause, and faith the instrumental cause

cause of true sanctification. But these others have a far lower rise. They are the effect of good education and breeding; of un sanctified consideration of their own circumstances and worldly interest, that oblige many to take up themselves, and live regularly; of fear and hope; of respect to credit and reputation; and in some, of legal convictions.

2dly, In the subject of them. Holiness diffuseth itself through the whole man, inward and outward, 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Theff. v. 23. These are mere plaisterings of the outward man, while enmity against God, rancour against serious godliness, and reigning power of lusts in the heart, do remain in their native force, and the old man bears full sway within; as appears in the Pharisees. They make a new life, but they leave the old nature unhealed, unrenewed.

3dly, In the extent of them. True holiness extends to all the Lord commands or forbids *Psal. cxix. 6.*; for the whole law is written in the heart, Heb. viii. 10.; and so they are *holy in all manner of conversation*. These never take in more than some shreds of the law; such men never set themselves to conform to it in its spirituality. They quite neglect many of the duties thereof; they consider them not, or they condemn them: for they have no mind to take more of them, than makes for their purpose.

Lastly, In the nature and kind of them. True holiness is a cluster of the fruits of the Spirit, *Gal. v. 22. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* They are acts of moral discipline, which have self-love in an unrenewed heart, not the love of God in a renewed heart, for their principle. The reason of them is not the will of God; for reasons of their own they do so, but not because God commands it. They do not their works in faith of the promise of assistance from heaven, nor of acceptance for Christ's sake; but out of their own stock, little valuing whether they be accepted or no; or if they do, looking for acceptance on their intrinsic worth. Their end is not the glory of God, and to express their gratitude; but as they come from self, so they are swallowed up in self.

Inf. 3. Vain are the pretences of the unholy to part with Christ; for no unwashed sinner has part with the holy Jesus. They do but deceive themselves in their pretending thereto; and the deceit will out on them to their eternal confusion, if they see it not timely. Here consider,

1. Who are unwashed sinners; and,

2. The

2. The state of unwashed sinners, as having no part with Christ.

1. Consider who are unwashed sinners. In the general, 1st, Those who have not yet escaped the pollutions of the world in the outward man, but in the course of their lives are conform to *the world lying in wickedness*, *Psal. xxiv. 3. 4. Gal. v. 19.—21.* How can they pretend to be washed, on whom the gross filth of sin is still lying, visible in their outward life and conversation? Men may escape that, and yet not be truly washed; escape, and yet be intangled again by apostasy. Let none such pretend to part in Christ, *2 Pet. ii. 20. 21.* for Christ will disown them.

2^{dly}, They that have no apparent beauty of holiness on them, *1 Theff. v. 5.* Men deceive themselves in despising the appearance of holiness, scorning to appear holy. That is but a piece of fashionable contempt of religion, poured on it in complaisance to an ungodly world, and a naughty heart: for where-ever grace is in the heart, it will shine forth in the life, *Matth. vi. 22. Philip. ii. 15. 16.* And though men may appear holy, who are not so; yet no man can be holy that has no appearance of it. If there is any religion at all in the world, it must be among them that have an appearance of it, and not among those that have not.

More particularly, they are yet unwashed by Christ,

1st, Who have never yet had the glass of the law held to their face, in a work of conviction of the sinfulness of their nature, heart, and life, *John xvi. 8.* Christ washes none till he has discovered to them their pollution. For till then they will never see their need of washing. He washeth by the word, as by its light it convinceth of defilement, points out the cleanness to be aimed at, and sets the soul afire anxiously to seek it.

2^{dly}, Who have not yet got a view of the filthiness, loathsomeness, and abominable nature of sin, *Ezek. xxxvi. 31.* Mens consciences may be fired with a sense of the guilt of sin; so as they may be brought to cast it out as a coal that would burn them; that yet are blind to the filth of sin, and see not how it defiles them. This appears, in that if they could be but safe from wrath, they would never part with sin.

3^{dly}, Who have not yet been made willing to be made clean. None are washed against their will, *Jer. xiii. 27.* And there is need of a day of power to make willing, *Psal. cx. 3.* Men naturally love to lie still in the pollution of

their sin, as the sow to wallow in the mire. They are as loath to be brought away, as fishes to come out of the water. Nay, there is in every unregenerate man, a heart-enmity against holiness, *Rom. viii. 7.* The heart spits its venom against it. They are not only not fond of it, but they hate it: A certain indication, that they are void of it.

4thly, Who have never yet felt an absolute need of Christ, his blood and Spirit, for their sanctification; and so have not yet come to Christ by faith for it, *Hos. v. 13. Psal. li. 2. and lxx. 3.* There is no washing, but by Christ, and in union with him: therefore they who have not come to Christ for sanctification, whatever pains they have been at to wash themselves, are yet unwashed.

2. Consider the state of unwashed sinners as having no part with Christ. Having no part with Christ,

1st, They have no part in the favour of God, *Eph. ii. 12.* They are *without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.* They are yet in a state of enmity with God; for he only is our peace, and the only way to the Father. All their sins, original and actual, in the guilt of them, do yet lie upon them: there is not one item blotted out of their account. For God gives no pardons, but to sinners in Christ: they must meet him there who would be pardoned or reconciled, *2 Cor. v. 19.*

2dly, They are loathsome in God's sight; his soul abhors them as abominable, *Tit. i. 15.* No sinner can be savoury in God's sight, but by the sweet-smelling savour of Christ's sacrifice upon them. The smell of *Jacob* was sweet to *Isaac*, in the goodly raiment of his elder brother: and sinners are savoury to God, only in Christ, *2 Cor. ii. 15.* While the sinner has no part with Christ, the filth of all his sin, original and actual, lies on him; and there is nothing on him to master the filthy savour arising therefrom.

3dly, They have no part with the family of God, but with the world lying in wickedness, *1 John i. 3. and v. 19.* They are *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,* being without Christ, *Eph. ii. 12.* They have no right to the privileges of God's children; for none can have that, but in the right of Christ as his head. What is the state of the world lying in wickedness,

is their state. They are under God's wrath, and the curse of the law.

Lastly, They shall have no part with the saints in light, but their part will be with sinners in outer darkness, *Col. i. 12. 13. Rev. xxii. 15.* One who has no part with Christ here, will have no part in heaven hereafter; for none can come there, but in and through him. They will have their part in *the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*, *Rev. xxi. 8.*

Inf. 4. Lastly, The way to be washed from sin, and made holy, is to get part with Christ by faith.

1. Think not that ye must first be holy, before ye can have part with Christ: but ye must first have part with Christ, ere ye can be holy, as appears from what is said. The former is as absurd as to say, the sick must be cured ere he come to the physician, and the filthy washed ere he come to the waters. Hence, (1.) Your unholiness cannot bar you from getting part with Christ. (2.) The first step to holiness is to believe.

2. This is a sure way to holiness; it cannot misgive. For hereby the sick are put in the hand of the physician, the filthy in the laver. The sinner united to Christ, must needs partake of his blood and Spirit: as through our relation to *Adam* we are defiled, so by our relation to Christ we come to be sanctified.

3. *Lastly*, This is the only way, as being of God's appointment. The sanctification of a sinner is above the power of nature, not to be reached by natural endeavours; they have not that word of appointment.

The distinguishing Characters of real Christians.

Being the Substance of several SERMONS.

PHILIP. iii. 3.

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

THE Apostle here gives a reason why he had called those false teachers, against whom he cautions the *Philippians*, *the concision*; viz. because he and all true believers, and not they, had the best claim to circumcision. In the words there are two things.

I. A position: *We are the circumcision.*

II. The proof of it; taken from the description of the true circumcision, which agrees to believers, and them only. In the position we have,

1. The party to whom the honourable controverted character belongs: *We*. Which includes, (1.) The Apostle himself, who was circumcised in the flesh, *verf. 5.* (2.) The *Philippian* church, to whom he speaks; who being of the *Gentiles*, were not circumcised in the flesh; which was the great quarrel the false apostles had with them. Yet this character doth not comprehend all of the church of *Philippi*; but the saints among them, to whom the following description agreed, and therefore all believers; that is, all that *worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

2. That character itself; *the circumcision*, i. e. the circumcised people, *Rom. xv. 8.* Now, they were not the circumcised in the flesh; therefore it is meant of their circumcision

cumcision in the spirit. See the distinction, *Rom. ii. 29.* *He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.* They had the thing signified by circumcision; while others that boasted of circumcision, had only the bare outward sign. And as the thing is far better than the sign of it, so they deserved the name best.

Before we proceed farther, we may deduce a few doctrinal observations from this first part of the verse.

Doct. 1. The sacraments of the Old and New Testament are in substance the same. The baptized *Philippians*, who were baptized with the Holy Ghost, as well as with water, are said to be circumcised. And so the Apostle attributes our baptism and the Lord's supper after a sort to the church of the *Jews*; *1 Cor. x. 1. 2. 3. 4.* *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: (For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ).* As the covenant was always the same in substance, so the seals of it were the same too. I note this, to guard against the *Popish* error, in making the sacraments of the Old Testament only shadow forth that grace which the sacraments of the New do confer, according to them; and that they were not the same in efficacy.

Doct. 2. The reality of that which seducers do pretend unto, will more readily be found in those that conscientiously oppose them. These men run down the Apostle, and other believers, in the point of circumcision; giving out themselves only for the circumcised ones. But the Apostle proves they had a better claim to it, than those that made all the noise about it. Thus the works of holiness are to be found more with those that press justification by faith, than with others who would be looked on as the great patrons of good works.

Use. Be not then deceived with fair speeches, but examine matters to the bottom; for often do those that have the highest pretences to right on their side, go farthest from it. And think it no uncouth thing, to find those who have deserted the principles of the Presbyterian church of Scotland

land in their separation, give out themselves for the only adherents thereto *.

Doct. 3. The sign in religion without the thing signified, is little worth. They are but the *concision*, and deserve no other name, that have only circumcision in the flesh. We are the *circumcision* that have the thing signified thereby.

To confirm this, consider,

1. All it can do is but to give a name before men, which they lose before God : *Rom. ii. 28. 29. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.* Christians we will be called amongst men, upon our receiving the sign of it ; but we will be but as the children of the *Ethiopian* before the Lord, if we have no more. It may give us an honourable title in the world, but it is but an empty title before God.

2. The sign is but a mere external thing, on which nothing of weight for salvation can hang : it is too little to make any saving difference betwixt them that have it, and others that want it. And therefore when the Lord comes to judgment, he throws down all together, *Jer. ix. 25. 26. ;* for he looks not to the outward appearance, to lay any weight upon it, but to the heart.

3. The sign in religion without the thing signified, is but an inefficacious thing ; as a body without a spirit. The sacraments have each two parts, the sign, and the thing signified, sacramentally united. He then that hath got the sign only, hath only the half, and the meanest half too. Sacraments are seals of the covenant ; but where there is no covenant, there can be no seal : and what avails a seal at a blank ? They apply Christ to believers ; but where there is no receiving, how can they apply ?

4. As men may in Christ's livery abide in the devil's service, so they may and will go with it into the place prepared for the devil and his angels, if they have not the thing signified. Thus our Lord, *Luke xiii. 26. 27.* tells us, that some shall say to him at the last day, *We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets ;* but that he shall say unto such, *I tell you, I know you not*

* The author means here the people called *Old Dissenters*, the followers of Mr *MacMillan* ; who are also the people immediately levelled against in his printed sermon on schism.

whence you are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. Some are circumcised, and yet are dogs, *vers.* 2. of this chapter, whose place is *without*. As to this privilege, avail it may to mens greater condemnation, but no further.

For *application* : Is the sacramental sign little worth without the thing signified thereby ? then I would have you take a back-look of your baptism and communicating. For to change the word into that which the gospel gives, we may say, *We, and only we, are the baptized, the communicants, that worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* For there are two great truths which plainly follow from this,

1. Baptism with water without being baptized by the Holy Ghost, is little worth. It is the dreadful sin of the generation, that they never reflect seriously on their baptism. Hence are two great evils. (1.) They are children of *Belial*, they go without a yoke. They live as if they had never sworn allegiance to the King of heaven, but were entirely their own, and none lord over them. (2.) They will be children of *Belial*, they will go without a yoke. They will not renew their baptismal vows in the sacrament of the supper, nor prepare themselves thereto. They will come under any covenant or engagement to men, to advance their worldly interest ; but they will not come under engagements to the Lord. They are obliged to their parents care in their infancy, that got them baptized ; but if they had been yet unbaptized, and would act like themselves, they would refuse and slight baptism, as well as the other sacrament. But let me lay home to the consciences of baptized persons, a few queries touching their baptism.

1st, In the general. It is true, ye are washed with water ; but are ye baptized indeed ? Ye have got the sign, but have ye got the thing signified ? Baptized ye were with water, but were ye ever to this day baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire ; *i. e.* the Holy Ghost working like fire ? Alas ! that universal coldness in the things of God in our affections, says, that as to most men, the fire of God's Spirit never came on them yet.

2^{dly}, But more particularly, I would ask you,

(1.) Hast thou ever yet seen thy natural pollution, that universal defilement of thy whole man, how that *Adam* left thee lying in thy blood, and a child of wrath, *Eph.* ii. 3. ? Hast thou ever yet seen the filth of sin so deep in thy nature and life, that no tears, prayers, &c. of thine, but only the blood

blood and Spirit of Christ, could wash thee? In baptism there is a profession of all this. If thou hast not seen this, what avails thy baptism? why wast thou washed at all with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?

(2.) Wast thou ever yet made partaker of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; that is, the thing signified by baptism, *Tit. iii. 5. 6.*? Alas! what avails the washing of the body with water, while the blood of Christ has never been sprinkled on the conscience, nor the water of the Spirit of Christ poured on the filthy soul, *John iii. 5.*? Alas! I fear many may in this matter make that confession of their faith, *Acts xix. 2. We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost:* and therefore I would say, *verf. 3. Unto what then were ye baptized?* They know nothing about regeneration, nor the Spirit's work upon the soul.

(3.) Were ye ever cut off from the old stock of Adam, and ingrafted into Christ, *1 Cor. xii. 13.*? Ye will then be knit to Christ by the Spirit and faith; ye will be branches of him, bringing forth the fruits of holiness by him; living in and on him, living by faith. Ah! baptized in the name of Christ, and yet not in Christ, but without Christ, and without God in the world, makes sad work.

(4.) Are lusts living and reigning; or are they dying, and your souls living a new life, *Rom. vi. 4. 5.*? The water was cast on you indeed, as the earth on a dead corpse; but what avails that if ye never yet died to sin? Ye have got free of that water cast on you at baptism, as he that rises out of the grave gets free of the earth; but what avails it if ye be dead in sin still, and alienated from the life of God? Ah! what are most of us but walking ghosts?

2. Communicating in the Lord's supper without the thing signified, is little worth. To be partakers of the bread of the Lord, without being partakers of the bread which is the Lord, will go but a small length.

1st, Have ye indeed eaten Christ's flesh and drank his blood by faith? Had ye an appetite after Christ, and have ye relished the sweetness of Christ, and the sweetness of every part of Christ, as one does of the bread which he eats; and have your souls knit with him, and received life, sap, and strength from him for your nourishment? Ah! what avails bread and wine without this?

2^{dly}, Do you live by him, *John vi. 57.*? Is Christ the staff

staff and comfort of your souls? Have ye set on to live the life of new obedience? Is it from him ye draw influences for actuating of grace, and for your growth? Do ye worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh? then, and not otherwise, are ye the circumcision.

Doct. 4. ult. Believers in Christ are the true circumcision. They have that in the spirit, which the Jews by this ordinance had in the letter. To illustrate this, consider,

1. Circumcision was a token of God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 11. which see. Ver. 7. *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* This is the privilege of every believer; he is in covenant with God, God is his God. O what a privilege is this, to be confederate with heaven, yea, to have God himself to be ours, heirs of God; so that God is the heritage! *This honour have all the saints.*

2. Circumcision distinguished the Jews from others, as God's people from those that were not his, Gen. xvii. 14. *So are believers God's Israel, his peculiar people, his jewels, his garden; while the rest of the world are but as his out-field.* They have the special presence of God with them, his peculiar love, care, protection, &c.; and, with Israel, are not numbered by him among the nations.

3. Circumcision was the cutting off of a part of the flesh; signifying that which believers have as their privilege as well as duty, the putting off of the body of sins, Col. ii. 11. *Thus believers have put off the old man with his deeds.* This is begun in regeneration, and carried on in gradual sanctification; their lusts are cut off, and cast from them in some measure. Their hearts are circumcised to love the Lord, so as they have new affections; their ears to hear his voice, which could not reach them before; and their lips to speak holily, and for God.

4. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance; witness Zipporah, who took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and said, *Surely a bloody husband art thou to me; A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.* So it is through the blood of Christ, that blood of the everlasting covenant, that the elect become God's people. They come to all their privileges by the way of blood: so that they may write on the covenant, and all their privileges, from

the greatest seat in heaven, to the meanest drop of water on earth, **THE PRICE OF BLOOD.**

5. Hence it was a painful ordinance. So is the believer's mortification of his lusts, *Gal. v. 24.* They are naturally addicted to the ways of the flesh as well as others; but they are helped with grace to cut off right hands, and pluck out right eyes, however unpleasant that work is to corrupt nature.

6. It was the flesh of the foreskin that was cut off, teaching them how sin is propagated by ordinary generation; and in true believers, the axe of mortification is laid not only to the branches, but to the root of the tree; the true circumcision reaching a stroke not only to particular lusts, but to the sin of our nature, *Gal. v. 24.*

7. It was in a secret part of the body. So true circumcision is that of the heart in believers, *Rom. ii. 29.* They are not outside Christians only, but the hidden man of the heart is for God: and *the King's daughter is all glorious within.*

8. It sealed the covenant of promises, particularly that of the righteousness of faith, *Rom. iv.* and of *Canaan's* land. So are they heirs of the heavenly *Canaan*, and that righteousness is theirs.

9. lastly, It was an engagement to duty on them; so is the grace of God on believers a singular engagement to duty.

Inf. 1. Then be among believers who will now, they shall for ever be cut off from among them that are not such as they. Woe to the hypocritical professor who is not thus honoured.

2. Then are all believers *Abraham's* spiritual seed, and heirs according to the promise. They are the *Israel* of God, having all those privileges in spirit and truth, that the *Israel* according to the flesh had in the letter; which may help them comfortably to read and apply those glorious things spoke of *Israel* in the Old Testament. Hence believers are called a *chosen generation*, a *royal priesthood*, an *holy nation*, a *peculiar people*, *1 Pet. ii. 9.*

3. Then let the saints keep at a distance from the profane world, *Acts x. 28.* and *xi. 3.* They whom God has distinguished from others, should not mix themselves with *Extrajim*, among the people. Even a *companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

4. lastly, Then distinguish yourselves from others by your

your holy life. Let it appear that ye are circumcised in heart, lip, and life; that sin has got a root-stroke, and the lusts thereof cut off. And so I come to the

II. *Second thing, the proof of the position, contained in a description of the true circumcision; that is, of the true people of God, real saints.* There are many disputes in the world concerning this; but the Apostle lays down a rule for deciding of the controversy. He gives three distinguishing characters of God's people. 1. If ye consider their *worship*, they *worship God in spirit*; 2. their *joy*, that is *in Christ*; 3. their *confidence*, they have *none in the flesh*. Whosoever can make good his claim to these, is a true Christian.

I. The *first* character of a saint is, he is one that *worships God in the Spirit*. In which there are three things. 1. He is a *worshipper*, and so is distinguished from Atheists. 2. The object of his worship is *the true God*; and so is distinguished from idolaters, that worship any other than the true God. 3. The manner of it; *in the Spirit*; and so is distinguished from hypocrites.

Doct. *Those, and only those, are God's people, true saints, real Christians, who worship God in the Spirit.*

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to worship God in the Spirit.

II. That this worshipping of God in Spirit, is a distinguishing mark of a true Christian.

III. *lastly*, Apply.

I. I shall shew *what it is to worship God in the Spirit*. It is, in a word, to give spiritual worship to God, to worship him, and be spiritual in the worship. Now, this hath a respect to two things.

First, It hath a respect to the whole of our service and obedience to God in our whole conversation. God, as our great Master, hath given us a law; in keeping of that law, and obeying it in our whole conversation, lies our service to God. The parts of it are two; holiness, comprehending our duty to God; righteousness, comprehending that to our neighbour. We have both these in one scripture, viz. Luke i. 74. 75. *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the*

days of our life. It is the same word as in our text, which might be, and is by some rendered, *that serve God in spirit*, viz. not only in the acts of immediate worship, but in the whole of their course. And truly the Christian life is as it were one continued act of worship, where all their actions, natural, civil, and religious, meet in God: and is therefore called *a serving of God day and night*, Acts xxvi. 7. Rev. vii. 15. in allusion to the priests and Levites that were always about the temple, *Psal. cxxxiv. 1.*; and no wonder, for they are *priests unto God*. Second table duties are turned by them into first: *James i. 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* Heb. xiii. 16. *But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Now, the Christian is spiritual in these things, *Rom. i. 9.* We must preach in the spirit, as well as pray in the spirit, *Eph. v. 21.* and vi. 6.

Secondly, It hath respect to those duties of religion which are parts of worship properly so called, as prayer, praise, &c. A true Christian will make conscience of these; he will worship God, and that in the spirit. If he pray, he will pray in the spirit, praise, and hear in the spirit. Now, the *worshipping of God in spirit* lies in these two.

1. The true Christian worshipping God, worships him with his heart, soul, and spirit, and not with his body only. Hence the Apostle says, *Rom. i. 9.* that he *served God with his spirit in the gospel of his Son*. The Jews in our Saviour's days had religion extremely sunk among them; it was turned into mere bodily exercise, for the most part: therefore Christ tells them, *John iv. 24.* that *God is a Spirit, and that they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth*. Now, this implies these things.

1st, The true Christian is an internal worshipper of God. There is an external worship called for in the second commandment, such as hearing, praying with the voice, &c. There is also an internal worship called for by the first commandment. In outward worship the body acts its part, in the inward the soul only acts. This lies in the soul's fearing, loving, trusting, depending on God, &c. which are the vital parts of practical godliness. The true Christian's soul is the temple of God; and in the Christian's heart, and there only, is God thus worshipped. They may make din enough in the outer court with worship to God, who never
worship

worship God there ; while self, the creature, and lusts as the abomination of desolation, stand in the holy place of the heart.

2dly, The true Christian joins inward to outward worship, and so body and spirit go on jointly. Hence the Apostle exhorts, as 1 Cor. vi. 20. to *glorify God in the body, and in the spirit, which are God's*. And as the body without the soul, so outward without inward worship is but a loathsome, lifeless lump, *Matth. xv. 7. 8*. It is not praying, but *praying in the spirit*, that is the distinguishing character of a Christian. Then do men worship God in spirit, when their hearts go with their bodies before the Lord, when the soul is humbled before the Lord while the knees are bowed in his presence, when with the lifting up of the hands the affections are lifted towards the Lord. O what avails the bowing of the knees, while the heart remains stout against the Lord ; the moving of the lips, while no moving of agreeable affections ; hearing of the word with the ear, while the soul is like a deaf adder ; petitions of good things, without sincere desires of them from the heart ; confessions of sin, without shame, and grief, and hatred of it ; thanksgivings, without a due sense of mercies ? It is but lip-labour.

3dly, The true Christian aims at, and in some measure attains the spirituality of worship. The spirit of the Christian, in worshipping God, is employed in that part whereof it alone is capable ; not only to do the thing, but to do it in a right manner, which is the spirituality of worship. As we worship God with our bodies, not only using them in his service, but composing them to an allowable outward gesture ; so we worship God in our spirits, while they are not only employed in conversing with God, and giving material obedience to his commandments, but also acting in those things in the manner prescribed by himself. Now, there are four things here principally that belong to the worshipping God in spirit, without which the very motions of our spirit, though good in themselves, in worship, would be but carnal. So the Apostle calls his old obeying of the law *flesh*, *Philip. iii. 6*. compared with *vers. 4*.

(1.) The true Christian discerns the commandment, and acts in worshipping God from a sense of it. For *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*, *Rom. xiv. 23*. He believes so and so, because God has said it ; and does so and so, because God has bid it, *Psal. cxix. 115*. *John v. 30*. The will of God, to a Christian, will not only be the rule, but the reason of his worship ; hence the hardest piece of it

is

is not neglected; as we find in the case of Abraham's offering Isaac, *Gen. xxii.*

(2.) The true Christian worships the Lord out of love to him: *Heb. vi. 10. God is not unrighteous, (says the Apostle), to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, &c.* Hence the whole of our service to God comes under the name of love in the sum of the commandments. If the domineering principle in our worship be either self-love, or slavish fear of God, it is not worshipping God in spirit, *2 Tim. i. 7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

(3.) The true Christian worships God with good-will. Hence in *Eph. vi. 7.* servants are exhorted with good will to do service, *us to the Lord, and not to men.* And says the church, (*Is. lxiv. 5.*) *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness.* If the heart be away from the work, and it be done grudgingly, doubtless it is spiritless worship, unacceptable to God.

(4.) The true Christian worships God for his honour and glory, as his chief end. God has proposed it as such, *1 Cor. x. 31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:* and the Christian aims at it accordingly, as Paul did, *Philip. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ, (says he), and to die is gain.* If self get up highest here, it is selfish, not spiritual worship, *Hos. xii. 1. Zech. vii. 6.*

2. The true Christian worships God by assistance from and influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Compare *Eph. vi. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit; with Jude vers. 20. But ye, beloved, praying in the Holy Ghost, &c.* And this assistance is given two ways.

1st, The Spirit gives habitual grace to make the man capable of spiritual worship: *1 Tim. i. 5. Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* John iii. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.* The carnal heart which the regenerating Spirit has never changed, is not capable of this worship, *1 Cor. ii. 14.*

2^{dly}, He gives actual grace, influences to stir up grace: *Rom. viii. 26. For the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.* He blows on the soul, and makes the

spices

spices send forth their pleasant smell. It is through him they mortify the deeds of the body, *Rom. viii. 13.* and by him, &c. by influences from him, they serve the Lord, *Eph. ii. 18.*; for they live out of themselves, by the Spirit of Christ.

II. I shall shew that *this worshipping of God in spirit is a distinguishing mark of a true Christian.*

1. All true Christians capable of worshipping God (for the Apostle speaks not of infants, idiots, &c.) have it. It is not the attainment of the first three only; the highest and lowest in Christ's school, the strongest and weakest of Christ's family, have it, though in different degrees. For,

1st, All of them are spiritual, because born of the Spirit; and every thing that brings forth, brings forth its like, *John iii. 6.* As soon as they are born, ere ever they be grown, they are spirit fitted for spiritual actions. And seeing every thing acts according to its nature, the new nature will make people serve the Lord *in newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter*, *Rom. vii. 6.*

2^{dly}, All of them have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, so that *they are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*, *Rom. viii. 9.* Now, the Spirit is given to help our infirmities, and to help us to worship God in the right manner. And he will never leave his people altogether carnal.

3^{dly}, That worship which is merely outward, and not in the spirit, is but the carcase of duties, unacceptable to God; and they that never perform more than this, are but mere hypocrites. Hence says our Lord to the scribes and Pharisees, *Matth. xv. 7. 8. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me.*

4^{thly}, External worship is properly but the means of worship; all outward ordinances, as prayer, hearing, &c. do tend to the promoting of love, trust, &c.; and the enjoyment of God can never be found but in worshipping him in spirit. So that unless we will say a man may be a true Christian, and never enjoy God in any duty, it is plain all Christians must worship God in the spirit.

2. That none but true Christians have this privilege is plain from this, that none other are spiritual; they are *in the flesh*, and cannot please God; they are *sensual*, (*Gr. souilly, natural, rational*), *not having the Spirit*, *Jude ver. 19.* What they do,

do, is at best but the product of their own spirits; which may carry the length of moral seriousness, but no further. None but true Christians can ever attain the spirituality of worship.

THE APPLICATION.

Inf. 1. Then there are many in the church that are none of God's people. This casts

1. All those that do not worship God. There is a generation that call not upon God at all, who never bow a knee to him in secret or in their families. Such are practical Atheists. Is there a God, and will not ye worship him? Remember that God will not acknowledge you that acknowledge not him.

2. Those that halve their worship. As, (1.) Those who will worship God in public, but in their families and closets not at all. (2.) Those who perform outward duties, but never internal worship: it is the least half ye do.

3. Those whose religion is confined to their solemn approaches to God, but have nothing of it in their ordinary conversation; whereas the Christian's life is as it were one continued act of worship; he is *in the fear of the Lord all the day long*, Prov. xxiii. 17.

4. Those who worship not God in spirit. And,

(1.) Those whose worship is mere bodily exercise, *Matt.* xv. 7. 8.; who may shew a great deal of devotion in their outward carriage, but have nothing of soul-devotion with it.

(2.) Those whose worship is only the exercise of their own spirits by themselves, not by the Spirit of the Lord, and are strangers to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, *John* xv. 5. Without this our worship is but carnal.

Inf. 2. Then all that worship God in spirit, may thence comfortably conclude, that they are real Christians, true saints. Spiritual worshippers are spiritual Christians, the true *Israel* of God, *whose praise is not of men, but of God*; and shall be gathered amongst the spirits of just men made perfect, when carnal worshippers shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity. Now, for ridding of marches here, I shall offer some marks or characters to distinguish those that worship God in spirit from others.

1. The spiritual worshipper's soul goes along with his body in the worship of God; his heart is in some measure brought up to the duty. Hence he can say, with the Psalmist, *Psal.* cxix. 58. *I intreated thy favour with my whole heart.*

His

His tongue and other members of the body employed in worship, are faithful interpreters of his mind: *Lam. iii. 41. Let us lift up our heart with our hands (Heb. to our hands) unto God in the heavens. 1 Tim. ii. 8. I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. Psal. xxi. 2. Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips.* The affections of the mind answer the actions of the body. *1 Cor. xiv. 14. My spirit prayeth, but my understanding (which I have of the thing I pray for in an unknown tongue) is unfruitful (to others that know not that tongue). A man's spirit prayeth, (1.) when he knows what he wants and seeks; (2.) when he has affections answerable to his petitions, Rom. viii. 26.*

But ah! what shall we say of that worship which is but lip-labour, where the heart joins not with the body? His body prays, but his spirit does not; his ears hear, but his heart is stopped; his mouth eats and drinks bread and wine in the Lord's supper, but his soul feeds not on Christ. Nay, this is not spiritual, but carnal worship. There are three ways how the soul joins not in the worship.

1st, Sometimes the man's spirit leaves him in duty quite, unless it be just as far as to keep him from speaking nonsense; and oft-times it leaves him so far, that indeed he speaks he knows not what before the Lord. The body is there, but the heart is gone, *Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The man is active enough about business till he comes to his knees, and then he expires as it were; the heart leaves him at the foot of the mount of God, and he never finds it till he comes down again from the mount of duties.*

2^{dly}, Sometimes the heart is intent on the carcase of the worship, but neglects the life and soul of it. See the picture of this case drawn, *1 Cor. xiii. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* The man has burning lips, but a naughty heart, like a potsherd covered with silver dross, *Prov. xxvi. 23. A garb of devotion appears on him outwardly: there is not an irreverent look in hearing, and yet never a word received with faith and love; there is never a wrong word in the prayer, and never one right affection, or true concern about the thing. This takes place especially in duties before others, where the eyes and ears of men are on them; which the false heart is more concerned to please, than the heart-searching*

God. And hence are men oft-times very lively to appearance in public, and yet as dead and flat in secret as ever; for then the wild-fire goes out, when men want the breath of applause to blow it up.

3dly, Sometimes the heart is so far from joining in the worship, that there are particulars which it enters its dissent against. "Lord, make me holy; kill this lust, let me never turn to it again," says the man. If the man truly consider what he says, the heart starts back from this petition, being glued to that lust; and he would think that he had but a sorry off-come, if God should take him at his word, *Jer. xiii. ult.*: and the heart would say, as *Peter* in another case, *Thou shalt never wash my feet*: and with the *Israe'lites*, *Jer. ii. 25. I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.*

But are your hearts in good earnest in your worship? Do you labour to bring your heart to duty, and to fix it on the life and soul, and not merely on the outward carcase of duty? Are your souls reconciled to the promises, which are the rule of prayers, particularly to those of universal sanctification, so that you have no petitions against which the heart dissents; your spirit goes along with your body in worship, and so ye are worshippers in spirit? To clear further this mark, I shall here speak to two questions.

Quest. 1. *May not the heart of a hypocrite, in worshipping of God, be intent upon the thing he is about, and have earnest affections to obtain it?* I answer, He may. *Felix's* mind was not only fixed on *Paul's* words, *Acts xxiv. 25.* but on the things preached by him, otherwise he had not trembled so as he did. The stony-ground hearers wanted not affection to the word; nor the foolish virgins in their prayer, *Matth. xxv. 11. Lord, Lord, open to us*: no doubt they were in earnest in it. But all this amounts to no more than moral seriousness, upon that principle, *Job ii. 4. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life*; which is far different from spiritual sincerity. Principles of self-love may tie a man's heart to those things which his heart is persuaded are necessary to his safety. And so all those affections of hypocrites to spiritual things, are yet but carnal affections, proceeding on a comparative, not an absolute judgment; that is to say, the man would rather part with his sin than go to hell for it; but otherwise he would be as loath to part with his lust as with a limb: in which case, though the man hold out his leg to the surgeon to be cut

cut off, his heart is far from going along with the action; as the Lord afflicts his people *not willingly*, Lam. iii. 33. *Heb. not from his heart*. But the gracious soul goes along with it on an absolute judgment, as the prisoner holds out his leg to one that would take off the fetters, with which the heart goes along.

Quest. 2. *May not a sincere soul, in worship, fall into those things whereby we have said the soul joins not with the body in worship?* Ans. 1. in the general, Every godly soul doth not at all times worship God in spirit. Hence says the spouse, Cant. iii. 1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not*. Sometimes their spirits are taken napping, and their worship would be a very sorry evidence of their state. The flesh gets above the spirit, and then they will be very dead and formal. But that is not their way, but their wandering off their way, which they have been on, and certainly will come again to. 2. More particularly, I would say, (1.) Though their hearts may be apt to wander, yet when they are any thing awake, they will struggle with them to bring them up to the duty. And though they cannot hinder (impertinent thoughts) the birds to fly about their heads, yet they will endeavour that they do not nestle in their hair, by entertaining of them. (2.) So far as these prevail, or a greater intenseness on the carcase than life of duties, so far will the spiritual worshipper be dissatisfied with himself, and with the duty, and reckon it lost duty with respect to the ends of worship; which must needs humble him, and make him groan as under a burden which he longs to be rid of. (3.) In so far as there is flesh in him, there will be likewise a dissent from the petitions of the Spirit, Gal. v. 17. and its actings in worship; but in so far as there is Spirit in him, there will also be an answer to that dissent of the flesh, and a protestation of adherence to the petition, and that according to the law of grace it may be granted, notwithstanding the dissent of the flesh, Gal. v. 17.—*The Spirit [lusteth] against the flesh*. All these things we have, Rom. vii. 21.—24.

2. The spiritual worshipper aims at the enjoyment of God himself in duties. Hence we have the declaration of the Psalmist, Psal. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple*. And again, Psal.

lxii. 1. 2. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. He comes to the galleries of ordinances, public, private, and secret, because the King is held there; goes through the streets and broad ways of duties to find his soul's beloved. Thus as God in Christ is the object, so he is the end of their worship. I will offer four things to clear this.

1st, The spiritual worshipper has a spiritual aim in worshipping of God. It is a heavenly trade he is driving by divine ordinances, a trade with another world, to be enriched with the product thereof. This was the practice of the Apostle, as we learn from *Philip. iii. 20. Our conversation* (says he) *is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* He is carried above the little carnal designs that many narrow souls have in their religion, as that of a name, *Matth. vi. 2.* or some other carnal interest, as those who followed Christ for the loaves, and many others who make religion lacquey it at the foot of interest.

2^{dly}, The spiritual worshipper aims at something in duties above self, even the enjoyment of God. O! it is sad to think how many duties to God are performed, so as they run all as *Jordan* into the dead sea (of self) in the end. Most men seek themselves, their peace, their security from wrath by duties, rather than God. They seek God, not for himself, but for themselves. But when the heart is spiritualized, it is unselfed; God himself becomes man's chief end, the centre of the soul, to which it natively tends by virtue of the new nature, which is a grace called *godliness*, *2 Pet. i. 6.*

3^{dly}, The spiritual worshipper aims at himself, as well as his benefits, in his worship. They come to seek him in his worship, not only as a master who must get work, and so will give wages; but as a husband who gives himself to his spouse, who gives herself to him. It is in the duties of his worship that the soul comes to be united more and more to God in this world; and they are appointed for that end, and used for it by saints.

4^{thly}, The spiritual worshipper aims at the being partaker of the divine nature in his worship. For as the iron is laid in the fire that it may be all fired; so the spiritual worshipper lays himself before the Lord, that he may be transformed into his image. And this is most properly the enjoyment

joyment of God; while the soul being knit to him by faith, his Spirit acts in the soul thus to change it, 2 Cor. iii. 18. See how God is enjoyed in heaven, 1 John iii. 2. *We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* And this is a most distinguishing character of a spiritual worshipper; for seeing the carnal mind, though never so much refined, is enmity against God, and all the attributes of God are not any thing distinct from him, the heart of the most refined hypocrite can no more be reconciled to his perfections, than light to darkness. Wherefore the soul seeking to enjoy God in his communicable perfections, to be holy as he is holy, seeks the enjoyment of God himself, and is a spiritual worshipper. Thus ye see the nature of this mark. And hence two things may fairly be inferred.

(1.) That spiritual worshippers look on external duties only as means to communion with God, and therefore will not rest in the work done. They are but the way to communion with God, and therefore are valuable only as means. They that look for no more of duties, but to get them done and by hand, and value their duties while they have no enjoyment of God in them, are carnal worshippers, that take up with the grave-cloaths, while the Lord is not there. Have over by this sermon, prayer, &c. will the saint say; for he is not as he who is to sail for pleasure, and therefore seeks not to go over but as a passenger.

(2.) That spiritual worshippers will not be satisfied with duties unless they enjoy God in them; as was the case with the spouse, Cant. iii. 2. 3. 4. *I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city, found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.* What avail the galleries, while the King is not seen walking in them? And if this be so, few worship God in spirit, seeing so many can tarry without grief of heart at Jerusalem, come to sermons, go to prayers, &c. and never see the King's face.

3. Spiritual worshippers act in their worship from a higher principle than their own spirits, even the Spirit of the Lord. Spiritual worship is a supernatural action, which carnal

carnal men are incapable of; and therefore there must be a supernatural principle of it. The most refined hypocrite doth but exercise a gift in worshipping of the Lord, and is destitute of the sanctifying Spirit's influences; their own spirits at best do but exert their natural powers in the best duties by them performed. Jude vers. 19. carnal men are called *sensual*, Gr. *soul-men*, or *men of soul*, whose own souls are their highest principles; and so it is explained in the next clause, *they have not the Spirit*, which is necessary to spiritualize a soul. And so, vers. 20. in opposition to these they are bid *pray in the Holy Ghost*. And the performing of spiritual worship thus, says,

1st, The spiritual worshipper looks not and lippens not to his stock within him for the performance of duties, but comes to duty under a sense of wants and weakness. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God*. He dare not adventure on the Lord's work in his own strength; whereas the conceit hypocrite lippens to and works the duty out of the stock within him; for he is never poor in spirit, Matth. v. 3.

2^{dly}, He looks to the Lord for the influences of his Spirit, crying and spreading out his sails for a gale from above; as did the spouse, Cant. iv. ult. *Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*. He stretcheth out the withered hand to Christ. "Here is the word, Lord, send the Spirit to make it effectual," &c. And this is the exercise of faith absolutely necessary to spiritual worship; for its work is to fetch the fire of the Spirit from Christ our altar, to set to the incense we offer. It is that which travels for ability for duty betwixt Christ's fulness and the creature's emptiness, setting down the blind and lame at Christ's door.

The worshipping of God thus by the Spirit is so necessary, that no worship is pleasing to God but what is thus performed. For Christ will not put in his center of intercession, but what is the product of his own Spirit. Hence says the Apostle, Eph. ii. 18. *Through Christ we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father*. And it is the *inwrought prayer* (as that word, James v. 16. may be read; or a prayer made with such vehemency, as one possessed by a spirit doth express himself) that availeth. And a groan thus delivered, is better than a prayer from our own spirits, merely adorned with all the flowers of oratory.

Here

Here a grave question comes to be handled, viz. *How we may distinguish betwixt exercising of a gift in duty, and acting from the influences of the Spirit?* Enlargement will not do it; for nature has its own enlargements, and there may be a straitening in a gift and enlargement in it too, as well as in grace, *Zech. xi. ult.* Thus God both enlarged and straitened *Saul* in his gift of wisdom, conduct, and courage. Delight in the duty will not do it either, *Ezek. xxxiii. 32.* Other folks gifts may greatly delight us in the exercise of them; and an easy and neat exercise of a man's own gift, may be very pleasant melody in the man's own carnal ears. But,

1. All the influences of the Spirit are humbling; and always the more of them, the more humble and vile they make the man in his own eyes. This may be seen in the angels, who though they are without sin, yet being under the most abundant influences of the Spirit, do cast vile man a copy of humility, *Is. vi. 2. 3.* Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Behold it in the man *Christ*, to whom the Spirit was given without measure, who was most exemplary in humility, *Matth. xi. 29.* Learn of me, (says he), for I am meek and lowly in heart. And it may be observed of all the saints of God, that the more of the influence of the Spirit they had, they were always the more humble; as we may see from the instances of *Abraham*, *Job*, and *Isaiah*. *Paul* after he was rapt up to the third heavens, was in his own eyes nothing, *2 Cor. xii. 11.* And the reason is plain, for the influences of the Spirit do always carry up the soul to whence they came; as the waters of the deluge, the more they increased, they carried the ark still nearer heaven: and the nearer we come to the light of God's countenance, our wants, weakness, and nothingness, must still appear the more.

On the other hand, the exercise of a gift merely, leaves always the soul in the same unhumbléd state it found it. For it is impossible that nature should work the soul into a gracious disposition; and nature's force is too weak to beat down the natural pride of the heart. Nay, nature will build up nature; and the better the gift is exercised, it will swell the heart the more: hence publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before *Pharisees*: *Is. lviii.*

3. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? And thus many swell with the little gift they get, till they burst all bonds.*

2. The Spirit's influences in duty fill the soul with a reverential fear of God in duty, *Heb. xii. 28.* which is excellent ballast to a light and frothy heart; and always the more of it, the more reverence of God, *Gen. xxviii. 17.* The reason is, because the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, *Gal. iv. 6.*; and so will work a child-like disposition in the soul towards God, as towards a father, and a heavenly father: so that the greatest familiarity with God will not work out, but work forward this reverence, *Psal. xlv. 9.*—*Upon thy right hand did stand (in token of reverence) the queen in gold of Ophir.*

But the mere exercise of a gift in duty can never impress this holy reverence of God on the soul; witness that lightness and frothiness of heart which men, that way, bring with them from duty, *Prov. vii. 14. 15.* For gifts exercised without the Spirit, raise a cloud in the soul; are light in the inside, dark in the outside; whereby the more they see of themselves, the less they see of God; and so their deluded spirits seem the more to be near an equal level with him. To clear this further, I shall propose and resolve some questions: As,

Quest. 1. *May not a hypocrite have in duty a great fear of God on his spirit?* Ans. A slavish fear of God as almighty and a judge, which casteth out love, a man may have, as *Felix* had in hearing *Paul*: but this filial reverential fear of God intermixed with love he cannot have, seeing he has not the Spirit of adoption; whose work it is to knit the saints hearts to God as a Friend and Father, and to draw them after him with such child-like affections, as makes them delight in his commands and providences. Hence says the Apostle, *2 Tim. i. 7.* *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind; Gt. a healing of mind, viz. from that slavish fear.*

Quest. 2. *But can saints have no such slavish fear of God?* Ans. As all the graces of the Spirit are imperfect and mixed in the saints, so is their fear of God not without a mixture of that slavishness. Hence saith Jesus unto his disciples, *Matth. viii. 26.* *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* It is the same word as *2 Tim. i. 7.* It is true, God never again gives them the spirit of bondage; but they may, through unbelief,

unbelief, take up a spirit of bondage again. But seeing they can never again lose the Spirit of adoption, neither can they lose that grace of filial reverential fear altogether: so that there is still as much difference betwix them and hypocrites, as betwixt the malefactor fearing the judge, and a son's fearing his father; who appears enraged against him, and about to put him out of his house; which yet will not kill natural affection.

Quest. 3. *But how can the saints fear God as a Father, when they are not assured they are his children?* Ans. The Spirit's operations depend not on our sense and knowledge of them. This was the wise observation of Solomon, Eccl. xi. 5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.* But as the Spirit sanctifies the saints whether they know it or not, so he works that filial fear of God in them, whether they know it or not. God's children are like those infants, who though they know not their father, yet by their features do father themselves.

3. The influences of the Spirit are always sanctifying, as well as assisting to duty: *Zech. xii. 10. I will pour, saith the Lord, upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.* They are, as the Baptist was, a burning and shining light. When the Spirit was poured out, according to that prophecy, *Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 3.* there appeared cloven tongues, as of fire. Behold the nature of the Spirit's influences. (1.) They give a man a new tongue to speak of and to God. It is a dumb devil, and not the Spirit, that makes men tongued-tied in prayers to and praises of God. (2.) They are sanctifying, burning up corruption in the heart and life, as tongues of fire. For as when at *Babel* languages were confounded, and so the holy tongue in which people were taught remained but with a few, then the world lost the knowledge of God, and grew most corrupt in their lives; so when God was about to remedy this with the gift of tongues, these appeared as of fire, because of the dross of the world that was to be burnt up therewith. Thus the Spirit's influences in duty still tend to make the man more holy in heart and life, set him more at odds with sin, and steel his spirit with new vigour to pursue holiness.* Hence we have that speech of the Psalmist, *Psal. vi. 8. 9. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice*

of my weeping. *The Lord hath heard my supplications ; the Lord will receive my prayer.*

But the exercise of a gift leaves the man still as unholy as before, as much in love with lusts as before ; as we learn from the case of those of whom Christ says, *Matth. vii. 22. 23. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name have cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Truth is prisoner in their heads.

And so much for the marks of spiritual worshippers. I come now to

Ist. 3. Learn from this not to think of gifts for duty above what is meet. The matter of gifts for duty is abused by two sorts of persons, the proud hypocrite, and the weak Christian. From this doctrine I have a word to both.

1. To the proud hypocrite. And,

1st. Are those, and only those, God's people, true saints, real Christians, who worship God in the spirit ? then ye pitifully miss the mark, when ye are more careful to get the gift than the grace of duty ; more concerned to order your tongues than your hearts in prayer. Gifts come from God indeed ; but there is less of God in them than grace, and that makes them more desirable than grace to a corrupt heart.

2dly. Be not proud of the gifts for duty that ye have. If ye have a gift of prayer, judgment, or memory, or utterance, &c. think not much of it. Truly we have no such reason ; and if we had no more of the hellish gift of discerning our own attainments and excellencies, than of other gifts from the Lord, we would not be so conceited. It is light from an ill air that gives a man such a view of his gifts as to be puffed up with them, *1 Tim. iii. 6.* It is such a light as appears before a man's eyes when he has got such a stroke on the head as blinds him. But consider,

(1.) They are God's gifts indeed ; but they are but left-hand ones, a crown that he can set on your head with the one hand, and within a little take from you with the other, as he did *Saul's*. They are of that sort that are common to Christ's sheep and the devil's goats. Grace is of another nature, a right-hand gift, with which God gives his heart, and is without repentance.

(2.) They can help you to the outside of duty ; but, alas !

alas ! they can reach no farther ; and what for serves the carcase of duty ? Ye may worship God with a gift ; but that is not worshipping in spirit, and so cannot set you among the children. The weak Christian that would think shame to speak before you now, shall be brought in, when the door of heaven shall be cast in your face for ever, if ye have no more.

(3.) Your gifts may be useful to others ; but, alas ! they are useless to you to as any spiritual profit. Hence says the Apostle, *1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. All is yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, O believers ; even hypocrites gifts are yours ; they are given them, not for their own sake, but the sake of others. The carpenters, that built the ark, the profit of their gift came to Noah, not to them, for they perished in the deluge. So was the case with the raven that fed Elijah. Your gifts may be means to save others, while ye perish yourselves.*

(4.) You may go to hell for all your gifts, *1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. Matth. vii. 22. 23. forecited. Light without heat serves only to show the way to the place where there is heat without light, i. e. to outer darkness, where the fire is never quenched. Gifts without grace are like a ship without ballast, that will easily perish. And when such a man is sinking into hell, his gifts will be like a bag of gold on a drowning man, precious in itself, but will only help to sink him the deeper. The devil has greater gifts than the best gifted in the world ; and some have thought it was his pride of his endowments that ruined him ; however, it is certain he is ruined notwithstanding his gifts.*

2. Some weak Christians are ready to be discouraged because they want those gifts for duty that they see others have, and from thence may be ready to conclude they have neither the gift nor grace of duty. To such I say,

1st, Your conclusion is rash ; grace may be where there is but a very small measure of gifts : *1 Cor. i. 26. 27. 28.*

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. It was the plain man Jacob (Gen. xxv. 27.) who was the prevailer with God; and the Spirit helps our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered, not with flourishes of rhetorick.

2dly, It is not the gift of duty, but the grace of it, that is acceptable with God. Grace with little gifts will go far, even to the throne of God: Rom. viii. 26. 27. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. As a father loves the lisping speeches of his child better than the empty well-worded compliments of another, so doth the Lord the duties of his own people. The glory of the second house was to be greater than the first; there was more gold in the first, but more grace, even Christ, in the second. So if Christ be in thy soul, there will be much grace, however little of gifts. If a beggar come to you, ye do not wait till he show his parts, but till he show his needs; and if he show you his fores, though he speak very ill, it is enough, he is a needy beggar, he must be served.

3dly, Great gifts had need of a great measure of grace to be ballast to them. And it is God's goodness to some, that they have no great gifts, they have so little grace to guide them with. God does with them as a wise father with his son that has but a little stock; he sets him down in a little farm, lest too much in hand should master him. It may be observed, that the men, the saints of greatest parts, have usually got the sharpest exercises to be ballast to their gifts, lest their heads turning over heavy for their hearts, should trust them up, 2 Cor. xii. 7. And ye see how it did in Solomon's case, the wisest of men; his gifts mastered his grace, and made him a fool to a degree. And how it broke his bones, see in his penitentials, Eccles. per totum. Take for instance Heman a man of vast parts, 1 Kings iv. 31. compare

pare his *Psal.* lxxxviii. *Job* was as an oracle for wit among his neighbours, *Job* xxix. 8. 9. 10. 21.—25. *Paul* the only scholar among the apostles, see *Act.* ix. and *2 Cor.* xii. Let the Christian be thankful for what he has.

Arthly, Thou hast the thing that is better, that is, grace; a little gold is better than a lump of lead. Dost thou come with thy heart to God in duty? aimest at the enjoyment of himself in duty? goest thou out of thyself to the Lord for ability for duty? then though thy gifts are very small, thou worshippingest in spirit. Good meat never tastes the worse that it is served up in a wooden dish; it is as good as in a golden platter, though the last makes the greatest dash in the eyes of spectators. If thy affections to God in duty be fervent, though your words be not very fine, they will never be cast in heaven for this.

I discharge them that are possessed with the dumb devil, to meddle with this I have been saying. They will not bow a knee to God, because, forsooth, they cannot pray. They will not open a mouth for God, because they have not the gift that others have; they will not speak of spiritual things, and care as little to hear them spoken of. They are grossly ignorant of the principles of religion; but they are at as little pains to get knowledge, and will not. But now, say they, we have not the gift, but God knows our hearts. But I tell you that are such, ye have neither the gift nor the grace of duty. It is true, God's children may be stammerers in speaking to or of him, but none of them are dumb like you. Their want of gifts is not such as to make them neglect the very matter of external duty as ye do. And what they have not, they desire to have, and endeavour to win at, that they may glorify God with it.

Inf. 4. Learn from this not to think much of the bare performance of duties. We have need to have our thoughts of our duties corrected. And this doctrine affords,

1. A confounding lesson to formal hypocrites anent their duties; and that is, That all the duties they have been working at all their days, are naught in the sight of God, because they were never spiritual worshippers. Perhaps ye will be counting ye have served God so many years; ye pray twice, thrice, or oftner in a day, heard so many sermons, received so many communions, &c. and be ready to value yourselves on this. But dreadfully will the count come down when God looks on it; it will turn to nothing at all in point of duty. Nay, ye will find them all set down

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in another count, the count of your works of iniquity, where they will make so many black *items*. O how will the man's heart fail him to hear what justice has to lay to his charge! *Imprimis*, unbelief, not believing in the Son of God; *item*, God's name taken in vain in so many pretended prayers; *item*, so many sermons heard without faith, love, and practice; *item*, so often bread and wine eaten at God's table, while there was no feeding on a crucified Christ, &c. *Matth. vii. 22. 23. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Whence observe, the wonderful works they did for Christ, which themselves and others wondered at, are in Christ's account *works of iniquity*. We make a tripartite division of people in the visible church. (1.) Some that serve God sincerely. (2.) Some that serve him hypocritically. (3.) Some that serve him not at all. God makes but two sorts, casting the two last into one, *Mal. iii. 18. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* Compare *vers. 17. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.* Whence learn, (1.) The righteous only serve God; as for others, whatever be the difference among them, they agree in that, both profane folk and hypocrites, that they serve not God. (2.) A man who is not a child of God, can perform no service to God in his account; slaves service is no service, *Hos. vii. 14.* The Lord's people are the children that serve him as a Father.

2: This doctrine affords a humbling lesson to the godly anent their duties. Many of your duties are naught in the sight of God. If only spiritual worshippers be real saints, ye act not as saints in any duties but those that are done in the spirit. And truly if this be so, it will do two things.

1st. It will bring your great number of duties down to very few, so that all ye have done for God may be soon told. Since ye were acquainted with Christ, ye durst never perhaps rise up nor lie down without praying; but when these things come before the Lord, it will be found there has been many a day and week ye have prayed none at all; many a sabbath in the kirk when ye have not heard the sermon;

mon ; many a sweet portion of scripture ye never read to this day, though ye have gone over and over it again.

2dly, It will make many a long duty of yours very short. Let that be taken off the duty that was not done in the spirit, and off it must go, many a long prayer and sermon will be brought to a very few sentences that ye have heard or prayed ; and many a sentence broken off in the midst where the heart left the man. I trow the skin and the dung of your sacrifices that must be burnt without the camp, will be more bulk than all the flesh of them that has come on God's altar.

3. It affords a necessary lesson to both, namely, Ye need Christ, ye cannot be without him. O how does the profane world need Christ ! But, O Sirs, ye need him as really when ye are going to your prayers, as the man that is going in the devil's fetters to his cups and his drunken companions needs him ; ye need him as really when ye are going to the sermon on the Lord's day, as he who profanely casts contempt on God's ordinances, by loitering at home on the Lord's day. Ye need him when ye are mourning over your sins, as well as others when they are revelling, and going the broad gate with tabret and pipe.

1st, Ye need himself. Sinners, ye need himself, to be united to him, to be one spirit with him. Hence says he, *John xv. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* If he would give you never so many gifts, if ye get not himself ye are nothing, *ye can do nothing*, *vers. 5.* There is nothing can make up his room. An eternal barrenness will lie on your souls ; the heavens will be as brass above you, and the earth as iron beneath you, if ye get not himself. And the axe of God's judgments will hew you down with your wild grapes, as well as others that have no shew of fruit, if ye get not himself. If ye grow on your own root, though ye should water it every day with your tears, yea tears of your blood, if ye get not Christ, *your root shall be as rottenness, and your blossom shall go up as dust.* Root and fruit shall be destroyed for ever from the presence of the Lord.

Saints, ye need himself, to be more and more closely united to him, to be growing up into him, *Eph. iv. 15.* According to your faith so will it be unto you, not only in point of privilege, but in point of duty, in point of holiness. Ye have come to Christ, but ye must be always coming to him,

him, 1 *Pet.* ii. 4. Mind to whom that was said, *John* xv. 4. 5. *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. Ye need him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. And it is he that God has made our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Ye need him for all.*

2dly, Ye need his blood. Sinners, ye need it; ye need it to make your persons accepted, to consecrate you for servants to the Lord, *Heb.* ix. 19. to be priests unto God: and without the sprinkling of that blood on you, God will no more regard your services, than a sacrifice by one who was never consecrated a priest; for all spiritual worshippers are made priests, 1 *Pet.* ii. 9. Ye need it to take away the guilt of your dead works of duties, which, till it be removed from your conscience, utterly unfits you to serve the living God; as they which were defiled with the touch of a dead body might not come into the tabernacle; to which the Apostle alludes, *Heb.* ix. 14.

Saints, ye need his blood. It is true, ye are washed in that blood already, but new defilements require new washings, *John* xiii. 10. There is an allusion there to the priests under the law, who were to bathe their whole bodies in the morning, but notwithstanding at every new service through the day they were to wash their hands and feet ere they approached the altar. Now, ye are washed in respect of your state, that continues; but ye must still be washing for the iniquities of your heels, that at every turn are compassing you about. Therefore the sea of glass stands always betwixt the saints and the throne, *Rev.* iv. 6.

3dly, Ye need his Spirit. Sinners, ye need him; there is no worshipping in spirit without the Spirit. They are but lifeless carcases of duty that are performed without the Spirit. That which died of itself was utterly unfit for a sacrifice; and such are your best performances without the Spirit. Now, it is from him the Spirit comes, *Rev.* iii. 1.

Saints also need the Spirit; for it is not enough to spiritual worship that the Spirit dwells in us, but that the Spirit influence us to and in duty. The Spirit must help our infirmities, stirring up the fire within us, putting grace in exercise,

ercise, otherwise our performances will be but mere bodily exercise.

Inf. 5. *lastly*, To shut up this, be exhorted and warned to take heed how ye worship God; in what manner ye perform every duty; labouring to be spiritual in all. And there are two things ye would in this mainly endeavour to study.

1. To get the heart brought up to every duty. Pray, confess, thank, petition, hear, &c. from the heart: *Col.* iii. 23. *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily; Gr. work it from your soul.* Gold is fetched out of the bowels of the earth, and pearls out of the bottom of the sea; and spiritual worship comes from the inner man, *the hidden man of the heart*; while external duties, like common stones, are found lying every where on the surface of the earth. We should be *fervent, seething hot*, as the word imports, while *serving the Lord*, *Rom.* xii. 11.

2. To go out of yourselves for ability to duty. This was *Joshua's* intent when he told the people that had engaged to duty, *Josh.* xxiv. 19. *Ye cannot serve the Lord; for he is an holy God: he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins.* When we go to duties we should do as *Elijah* did, lay the sacrifice on the altar, and then look to the Lord for fire from heaven to consume it, *1 Kings* xviii. 33. 37. 38. The Spirit of the Lord is that fire from heaven which burns our sacrifices of duties, and makes the smoke of them ascend towards heaven for a sweet-smelling savour. And as no sacrifice was accepted but what was burnt by that fire from heaven, (hence *Psal.* xx. 3. *Accept [Heb. Reduce to ashes] thy burnt-sacrifice*); so no duty is accepted but what is by the influence of the Spirit. When then we go to duty, sit down on our knees, &c. here is the sacrifice; but where is the fire? If it be struck out of our own spirits merely, it will make an offensive smoke; but an acceptable flame, if from heaven we fetch it by the greedy looks of faith. Consider,

1st, God is a Spirit, and therefore must be worshipped in spirit, *John* iv. 24. How unsuitable is mere bodily exercise in religion to the nature of God! Were we to serve dead idols, a dead formal worship might serve. But the living God must have lively service, or it cannot be accepted: *Rev.* iii. 19.—*Be zealous therefore and repent.*

2^{dly}, God takes special notice how duties are done. Take heed how ye hear, and so how ye pray, &c. God will have

his service well done, as well as done, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.: yea, he reckons it the main thing in duty; so necessary, that the want of it alters the very nature of duty, and turns it to sin, Hof. vii. 14. 1 Cor. xi. 20.

3dly, Your duties are the touchstone of your faith, of your interest in Christ, &c.; ye have much need to take heed to them. Spiritual worship is the mark of a child of God; so that by your worship ye will prove either that ye are real saints, or that ye are but hypocrites.

And so much for the first character of a saint, namely, that he is one that worships God in the spirit.

II. We come now to the *second* character of a real saint: He is one that *rejoiceth in Christ Jesus*. In the first character a saint is represented as a great worker, in good works and service to God, going with his heart into the heart, marrow, and soul of duties; and therein going beyond hypocrites, that never go farther in than the outward court with their duties, their duties being like themselves, *having not the Spirit*; while the sincere person works in duties, as if he minded to win heaven by them. It would then be expected, that those duties should be the joy, confidence, comfort, and life of his soul. Sure, they that have much less reason, make that use of their duties; but the saints do not so. Though they do more, they trust less in what they do than others. Nay they overlook them as to any confidence in them before the Lord; and though they *worship in spirit*, they *rejoice in Christ Jesus*. Though they bring their hearts to duty, yet that is not the thing that keeps up their hearts before the Lord, but Christ. In him they rejoice, or, as the original hath it, *they glory*: which is more than simply to rejoice. It imports a glorying or boasting with a strutting out of the neck, and casting up of the head in a boasting way, Psal. xlv. 8. It is the soul's acquiescing with joy in Christ as its only hope against all that might harm it, not being ashamed to profess it.

Doct. That is the real Christian, who though he worships God in spirit, yet rejoiceth in Christ Jesus.

In handling of this doctrine, I shall shew what it is to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and in what sense the true Christian rejoiceth

rejoices in him. And ye would notice this as a mark of a true saint.

But there is an *objection* meets us here in the threshold, that must be removed. It is this: *If joy in Christ be a mark of a gracious state, what shall come of poor doubting trembling Christians, who go mourning without the sun, that stand most in need of marks that they may rejoice in Christ; while others that can rejoice in Christ, do already see their interest?* *Ans.* The mark in the text is given by the infallible Spirit, and therefore doubtless is consistent with what he elsewhere teacheth in his word, and must be so understood as not to exclude the mournful worshipper in spirit. But to clear the point, I offer these two things.

1. There is a *radical* or *habitual* joy in Christ; which is a disposition of soul inclining and bending the soul towards Christ as the spring and object of its joy before the Lord: for as when God made *Adam*, Eccl. vii. 29. with a frame of soul inclining to the will of God, this disposition did denominate him *righteous* before he had done *one righteous act*; so when, in the new creation, the Lord puts this disposition in the soul, it may denominate him *a rejoicer in Christ*, even before he *actually* rejoice in him. Then there is an *actual* joy or rejoicing in Christ, wherein the soul acting from that disposition, solaceth itself in the Lord in greater or lesser measure. Upon this I say,

1st, Every believer, even in his darkest hours, has this *radical* and *habitual* joy in Christ: *Psal. xcvi. 11. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* As there is a worm of sorrow at the root of every gourd under which the wicked doth rejoice, *Prov. xiv. 13.*; so there is a seed of joy even in the saints mournings, that will get above the clouds in due time. There are always some pieces of heaven in their hottest hells. There are everlasting arms underneath, which for the time are only keeping the soul from sinking: but we may say of them, as *Naomi* of *Boaz*, when he had given *Ruth* six measures of barley to help them to live a while, *The man* (says she, *Ruth* iii. ult.) *will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day*, till you be mistress of all he has. So these will not rest till they have lifted up the soul to a fullness of joy in the Lord.

2^{dly}, Though a believer does not always rejoice actually before the Lord, more than he does always act faith, which sometimes is not in exercise even in the best; yet when he does

rejoice before the Lord, he rejoices in Christ: *Gal. vi. 14. God forbid*, says the Apostle, *that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. If the believer's feast-day come but seldom about, yet when it comes, he keeps it in the white raiment of Christ's righteousness, the only garment fit for a day of joy. And he will not lay off his blacks or mournings till Christ send him other garments, *Jf. lxi. 1.—3. Lam. iii. 39.*

2. There is *actual* joy; which is twofold. (1.) There is a *sensible* joy, *Luke i. 47. My spirit* (says *Mary*) *hath rejoiced in God my Saviour; leapt for joy*, as the word signifies. And this God's people sometimes get in Christ, so as their very souls are made to leap within them, while they wonder at his love and rejoice, and rejoice and wonder. And so much are we addicted to sense while in this body, that we will scarce allow any thing but this to be called joy. But that is a mistake: for, (2.) There is a *rational* joy; which is the satisfaction the reasonable soul has in that which it loves and desires. We see this in the man Christ, who being *a man of sorrows*, had little of that sensible joy while in the world. It is remarked of him that he had one hour, or part of an hour of it, *Luke x. 21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit*; clearly teaching it was not his ordinary. Notwithstanding, Christ had an abiding joy, (*John xv. 11. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full*), to wit, a solid satisfaction in the welfare of his disciples. The original words in these places clear this difference; the former being the same with that *Luke i. 47.* the other importing nothing of exultation, but a joy in things prospering with a person.

Now, although the believer may but seldom have this sensible joy in Christ; and I know not but the spirit of heaviness may so sit down on some, that they may never taste of this sensible joy till they be in heaven, *Heb. ii. 15.*; yet every believer *habitually* and *ordinarily*, as they are in the exercise of other graces, have this rational joy in Christ: for if *the kingdom of God be righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, *Rom. xiv. 17.* where-ever it comes, these must be there too. And this I take to be the joy aimed at in the text, as appears by its being opposed to hypocrites their confidence in the flesh; which speaks forth rather a rational complacency they have in the flesh, than any sensible joy.

The soul's union with Christ is often held forth in the scripture under the notion of a *marriage*; and we read of a twofold joy in this. (1.) The joy wherewith the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, *Is. lxii. 5.* (2.) The joy wherewith a husband, in the continuance of his married state, rejoiceth over his wife, *Prov. v. 18.* The former is an emblem of that sensible joy which believers sometimes have in Christ, and particularly at the time of their first receiving of Christ, while they are yet but young converts, and are fed with lumps of sense, *Hos. ii. 14.* An instance of it we have in the eunuch, of whom it is said, that *he went on his way rejoicing*, *Acts viii. 39.* But although that sensible joy do not last, more than the fondness of a new-married couple; yet there is an habitual rational joy, which remains, as other graces, with the people of God, whereof the latter is a good resemblance. For as they that have made a good choice, though they may remit of their fondness, yet continue to have a solid rational joy in one another, which though it be not so violent as the other, yet is more strong and fixed: so it is here. This is it which is here given as a mark of a true saint. And in regard hypocrites may have a great sensible joy, *Matth. xiii. 20.* whatever sensible joy any pretend to must be examined by this, for this is the root on which all true sensible joy doth grow; and these joyful flashes of hypocrites will be found to spring from another root.

Now, the nature of this rejoicing in Christ lies in these four things.

1. A holy complacency in Christ.
2. A rolling of the soul over on Christ for all.
3. A rest of the heart in him as a fit match for the soul.
4. A confession of him unto salvation.

FIRST, There is in this rejoicing in Christ, a *holy complacency in him*. The believer has got a view and trial of Christ, and he is well pleased with him. There is a mutual joy of the parties in the spiritual marriage. Where the soul is *Beulah, married to the Lord*, it is also *Hephzi-bah, the Lord has a complacency in it*, *Is. lxii. 4.* And so have they in him, *Mal. iii. 1.*—*The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye DELIGHT IN.* All the Jews professed this as God's people, and the godly among them really had it. Though they are eagle-eyed ones in spiritual things, in comparison of the blind world; yet they spy no fault in the mystery

mystery of Christ, but are well pleased with, and acquiesce in the grand device of salvation through Christ crucified. The Father made choice of him, carved out every piece of his work to him, in the matter of the redemption of sinners; and he is well pleased with his choice, *If. xlii. 1. Matth. iii. 17. 2 Chron. vii. 16.*: and it is unanimously approved in every point by the multitude of them who are called, and faithful, and chosen; who all with one voice cry, *Grace, grace to it; grace, grace to the choice; grace, grace to the contrivance, and every part of it.* Sirs, since men lost the way to happiness, but not the desire of it, they have chosen new gods and guides, some one, some another; and *every man will walk in the name of his god.* God the Father has made a choice for them of a captain of salvation; the gospel is the pleading of the excellency of this choice, and puts the trying vote to the world, *Approve, or, Not?* The plurality has always voted, *Not approve*; but believers have with their souls approved the choice, *1 Cor. i. 23. 24.* And if ye be amongst the *approvers*, take his own word for it, ye are his, *Matth. xi. 6. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Now, we cannot rejoice in, nor be well pleased with any thing unless we see a suitability in it to us. When a man has made his choice, if afterwards he find it unsuitable to him, this kills his joy in it: he sees he was mistaken; for when he made the choice, it was upon its supposed suitability. Accordingly the believer rejoicing in Christ, surely beholds his absolute suitability unto that for which he has made choice of him. And there is a threefold suitability of Christ here to be noticed.

First, There is a suitability of Christ, and the mystery of Christ, to the *divine perfections* or *attributes* concerned in the salvation of sinners, that is sweetly discerned by every believer, more or less clearly, and acquiesced in heartily. Hence says the Apostle, *1 Cor. i. 23. 24. We preach Christ crucified—unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* There is no man that knows what God is, and what salvation is, that has got that matter of eternal salvation laid close home to his heart, but will know well on what he will venture his soul before such a holy God. They will see, that the holiness, justice, &c. of God are such fixed rocks, as they will never expect they shall be removed for them; and therefore will absolutely despair of salvation in any way inconsistent with

with the honour and perfections of God. Hence then it plainly follows, that the soul which indeed rejoiceth in Christ, hath seen this suitableness of Christ to the divine perfections. Blessed are ye then, O believers; for ye see and acquiesce in this way of salvation, as suitable in that respect. And that this character may have the more weight with all the saints, and the naughtiness of others may be discovered, consider,

1. As there is a special illumination that believers get, and to which the most refined hypocrite is a stranger, as appears from *John* iv. 10. *Psal.* ix. 10. Christ's differencing the sincere and hypocrite as wise and foolish; so there is an illumination in the knowledge of the mystery of Christ its suitableness to the divine perfections, that is peculiar to his saints, *1 Cor.* i. 23. 24. *2 Cor.* iv. 6. And therefore the whole of the work of grace comes under the name of *the revealing of Christ in a soul*, *Gal.* i. 16. And what is the ruin of many that get convictions and reform, but the want of this saving discovery of Christ? So that all their religion ends in a legal Christless turn given to their lives.

2. How few are there who ever dig so deep in the sin of their hearts and lives, as once to put it to the question, whether their salvation be consistent with the honour of God, or not? Unto some men God, Christ, and sin, are veiled all their days; they never get a true view of any of them; and so whatever they do in religion, is just a leap at random, *even as it falls*, which is the import of that word, *walking contrary unto the Lord*, *Lev.* xxvi. 23. and their believing (to call it so) is but a venturing of their souls on they know not what. And as for many others that have had some exercise about their soul's state on their spirits, they were never brought so low, but they thought ever if they could mourn for sin enough, reform, and believe in Christ, without any eye to his atoning blood, shed to retrieve the honour of God impaired by sin, all would be well. They were never so low as to see salvation so far above them as the honour of God has set it, never to be brought down but upon a just satisfaction to the honour of God for what they have done against it; and that a satisfaction utterly beyond the reach of their sufferings, reforming, repenting, believing, &c. To which were they brought, they would rejoice in Christ Jesus as suited to that work, the repairing the honour of the divine perfections, which stand betwixt salvation and them, *1 John* i. 7. *And the blood*
of

of *Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* But how can they rejoice in a salve for a sore under which they never smarted? *Rom. v. 11.*

3. Consider, all men as they are sons of the first *Adam*, are sons of *pride*, who see no glory but in the way of the first covenant; which is, that God should have his honour from them whom he saves. And because man, by the breaking of that covenant, lost his eyes, which are never under it restored, therefore they have but low thoughts of the honour of God. And hence we find *Adam* staying in Paradise, like a shameless adulteress in the house of her husband, till God drove him out, *Gen. iii. 24.* with such a sonnet as that, *Jer. xi. 15. What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many?* And while they have such low thoughts of it, it is no wonder they think little may serve to repair it. And the pride of the heart being unsubdued, they can see as little glory in *Christ* crucified his repairing it, as a proud bankrupt would see in his being declared unable to pay his debt, and one paying it for him, while he thinks he might have paid it himself, or it was not so much but might have been forgiven.

Secondly, There is a suitableness of *Christ* to the case of the soul, which the believer sees, and so is well pleased with, and acquiesceth in *Christ* as thus suited to his case. Unless the believer saw this, he could never rejoice in him. If ye would lodge a starving man in a palace, clothe him in the most costly attire, and fill his pockets with gold, behold he is at the point to die for lack of meat, and what good can these do to him, how can he rejoice in these, they are not meat, and so not suitable to his case? Now, the child of God has seen his case, and *Christ's* suitableness to it every way, and so approves of and acquiesceth in him as such, *1 Cor. i. 30. 31. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Every soul feels a want of something; and since *Adam* broke, and turned himself and all his posterity beggars, they are going up and down among the creatures seeking supply for their wants, and salve for their sores. Now, whatever they can purchase among them, though it promises fair afar off, yet when they come near and apply it, still they find it unsuitable; it will not do: *The bed is shorter, than that a man can stretch himself*

himself on it : and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it. And this makes the heart secretly sigh, while it is attacked with a new dissatisfaction on every new disappointment ; though they are so besotted, as that when they are wearied in the greatness of their way ; yet say they not, *There is no hope*, *Is. lvii. 10.* but go out again to beg at those doors where they have got a thousand naysays before. Now, while the elect soul is thus wandering among the rest, the Lord opens its eyes, as he did *Hagar's* to see the well, *Gen. xxi.* and Christ is discovered to the soul ; and the surprised soul cries, *John i. 45. I have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write.* Now, says the soul, this is my rest, and here I will stay. Hence is that parable, *Matth. xiii. 45. 46. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man, seeking goodly pearls : who when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*

An excellent emblem of this ye have in that, *Mark v. 25.—34.* concerning the woman which had an issue of blood twelve years. Where notice, (1.) She never tries Christ till she had tried others one after another, and found all physicians of no value. (2.) When she hears of Christ, she believes, and by faith concludes, there was a physician now suited to her case. (3.) There was a great multitude about Christ that stood as much in need of him as she : but she saw his suitableness to her case, while they saw not how suitable he was to theirs ; therefore she only gets the touch of faith. (4.) She thrusts forward, leaves all her other physicians, and takes him for and instead of all, as fully and only suited to her case.

Now, amongst all those things in which the saints see Christ's suitableness, I shall only instance in these two.

1. They see a glorious suitableness to their case in the person of Christ, as he is *God-man*, *Is. ix. 6 :* that the Mediator as such a person is a contrivance to them of infinite wisdom, answering at once the honour of God, and the sinner's necessities ; in which the child of God heartily acquiesceth. The man sees himself by nature in a sad case, which the whole creation cannot help. There is a breach betwixt God and the sinner ; what man, what angel, can be daysman, able to lay hands upon both ? Why, here is one so high that he is *the Father's fellow*, *Zech. xiii. 7. :* yet so low as that he is *bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh*. He is nearly related to both. O suitable person ! The sinner is

separate from God, that is hell begun on earth; how shall the sinner be reunited to God? Will the sinner attempt immediately to unite with God? God's justice and holiness staves him off; they will not, cannot cleave together, as iron is not mixed with clay. Can angels unite them? Nay, they needed another themselves to be a bond of continuance, though not of beginning or making their own union with God. But behold in the person of Christ how it may be done. Man's nature is united already to the divine nature in the person of Christ. Behold our new relation to God, which the angels themselves cannot boast of. Here is an union for a foundation of the mystical union which the soul is seeking. Here is a suitable meeting-place betwixt God and sinners, where they may unite again with the safety of the divine honour; *The fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily; God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*; and in the flesh of Christ the sinner may meet God with safety of his life: and so both unite in him. The sinner has fallen, like *Lucifer*, as a star from heaven; how can he get up again? behold Christ as the ladder reaching betwixt heaven and earth, set as low as the sinner could wish in his human nature, and reaching as high as he can desire in his divine nature. O glorious person suited to sinners' case!

2. The saints see a glorious suitableness to their case in the offices of Christ, and such a suitableness as makes them acquiesce in him.

1st, He is a *Prophet*, the interpreter of the Father's mind, who was in the Father's bosom from eternity, and is privy to all his counsels; and so sent of the Father to be *the light of the world*. O then he is just such an one as the soul wants, *Luke ii. 32. A light to lighten the Gentiles*. The soul looks within itself, and sees itself a mass of darkness and confusion, at every turn ready to mistake the way; and walking through a wilderness full of pits of destruction, cannot but despair of ever falling on the right way, keeping it, or coming safe to the end of their journey, if they get not a guide. Now, the soul sees Christ as *the sun of righteousness, the wisdom of God, and the power of God*; and so acquiesceth in him, *Psal. v. 8. Is. xlii. 16.*; knowing, that as there is a fulness of darkness in them, there is a fulness of light in him; to whom they may go with all their doubts, and fears, and perplexities, and get all their ravelled cases redd, and learn from

from him the case they cannot give a name to themselves, *Judg. v. 10. 11.*

2dly, He is a *Priest*, who has made the atonement by the sacrifice of himself, and is gone in now within the vail to present to the Father his own blood, and thereupon to intercede for sinners, and ever liveth for that end, *Heb. vii. 26.* Hence says the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 34. It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* O how suitable is this in the saints eyes to a sinner's case? When sin and guilt is laid home to a man's conscience, there will be many questions in the heart. O, says the soul, *wherewithal shall I come before the Lord?* How shall I get the demands of this law that has me by the throat satisfied, while they run so high above all I can do or suffer? What is able to quench this fire of wrath that has gone out against me for my sins? How will a pardon be obtained? or conscience purged of guilt? But Christ being discovered to the soul in the glory of his priestly office, easeth the distressed soul. For in him he sees all the demands of justice and the law answered to the full; an everlasting righteousness brought in, in which a sinner may stand before the Lord; atoning, peace-making blood, that is able to quench the fire of God's wrath, wash out the deepest dyed guilt, to cancel all the items that stand in justice's debt-book against them, so as they shall never more be chargeable on them, and to purge the conscience from dead works. And thus the soul acquiesceth in him as the only refuge.

And then for his intercession the soul beholds a glorious suitableness to its case therein; which makes them rejoice and glory in him, *Rom. viii. 34.* above-cited. They have much business in the court of heaven, and they cannot manage it: O how sweet to have a friend at court, through whose intercession the purchase of his blood comes to be first applied to the soul, *John xvii. 20. 21. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* They are offending every day; O but in him they have a constant resident at the court of heaven to take up emergent differences, so that it cannot come to a total rupture betwixt God and them, *Heb. ix. 24. For Christ is entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* But how shall

guilty creatures have access to the King's presence? Why, through him, *Eph. iii. 12.*; for he is the Father's favourite, the great Secretary of heaven, who leads by the hand (as that word signifies) the supplicants into the presence-chamber. They dare not present their petitions in their own name; then he takes them and presents them, and the Father hears them out of his mouth; and so they cannot but come speed, when he offers them with the incense of his intercession upon the merits of his blood, *Rev. viii. 3. 4. 5.*

3dly, He is a *King*, and that one *against whom there is no rising up.* He is the *King of glory.* But *who is this King of glory?* Even the *Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,* *Psal. xxiv. 8.* Sure I am, looking to the white side of this displayed glory, every soul that has a spunk of grace, will say, Then he is just whom I want, whom my soul desires. O suitable King of glory! The soul sees it must fight, and will fight; but O weak, weak in battle is it. It is not man enough for the corrupt nature, the ill heart, no not to turn away the face of one of the least of that hellish master's captains; unable to grapple with and overcome the least lust in its own strength, more than a child can grapple with a giant. Satan is too hard for them; the world too sore, especially having friends within them ready to side with these enemies. O what a glorious figure must this King of glory make in their eyes in this case? What rejoicing of heart must the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host bring to them? *Jf. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our king, he will save us.* In him will the saints acquiesce, and look no where else for help, but be content to go at his back against all the powers of hell, to rencounter *Goliath*, though they have but stones of the brook for the attack, and adventure on the walls of the cursed *Jericho*, though they can do nothing but walk about them, and give the shout; for, says the soul, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*

O Sirs, have ye ever seen this suitableness of Christ to your case? and do your souls acquiesce in him as such, as only and fully suitable to it? (for that is the sense of the text). Is *HE*, and only *HE*, in your eyes, the party fit for you in your case? ye are they then that rejoice in Christ Jesus. But, ah! it is to be feared, that Christ is a veiled beauty to many of us, and that there are not a few in whose eyes there are other things as suitable and more for them, than that Christ in whom the saints see this heart-attracting glory;

Cant.

Cant. v. 9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? Consider for evidences of this.

1. There is a generation whose hopes of pardon and salvation are built on the foundation of the mercy of an absolute, unatoned God. They see no need of the Lord Jesus; they know him not as the only mean of conveyance of saving mercy to sinners. Do these rejoice in Christ? No, they cannot, nor never will, till their hearts be wounded with an arrow they have not yet felt. Know ye, that the *earth* shall sooner be *forsaken*, and the *rocks* shall sooner be *removed* for you, than ye shall ever taste of mercy to salvation but through Christ. If ye be out of Christ, mercy cannot save you, seeing it cannot act in prejudice of justice, and God cannot deny himself: *Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* If thou rejoice in Christ, and hast seen his suitableness, the sight of an absolute God will be a terror to thee, and thou wilt desire to know no God but *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, *Eph. i. 3.*; nor wilt thou dare to look to God, but through the veil of the flesh of Christ, *Heb. x. 19. 26.* Thou wilt expect no pardon, but what comes streaming through the blood of the Mediator, though thou had a flood of tears to fetch it in; nor no embraces from the Lord, but with arms dyed red in that precious atoning blood; nor a smile of his face, but through his wounds. It is the character of Christ's church and people, *1 Thess. i. 1. they are in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ*; whereby is not only signified their union with both, *1 John i. 3.* but they are distinguished from the now rejected synagogue, *1 Thess. ii. 16.* which worship the Father, but kill his Son, *vers. 15.*; and therefore *please not God*, *ib.*: *for he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*, *John v. 23.*

2. There is a generation who, like *Moab*, have been at ease from their youth. They confess they are sinners, and who denies that? but they have hitherto stood out proof against convictions of their sin and misery; and that question, *What shall I do to be saved?* never came so close home to them, as these, *What shall I eat?* or, *Wherewithal shall I be clothed?* And consequently they never saw Christ so suitable to their case, as earthly supplies; for the joy in the remedy cannot rise higher than the apprehension of the evil of the disease.

And

And amongst those who have had their convictions, there are not a few with whom that axe never went to the root of the tree, but the trouble they have had has risen only from their actual sins; but the sin of their nature, that root fixed in the earth with bands of iron and brass, has still lain out of their sight: and therefore vows, resolutions, watchings against and mourning over these, have still appeared more suitable to their case, than the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, who alone can change our nature. But if thou art a rejoicer in Christ, thou hast got the best view of his glorious suitability to thy case out of the depths of the corruption of thy nature: *Rom. vii. 24. 25. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* See how the Lord raised *Elisba's* credit amongst the people of *Jericho*, that they might own him for the prophet of the Lord; it was by healing of their waters, *2 Kings ii. 19.—22.* As for the waters that were in their vessels within their houses, they might several ways correct the unwholesomeness of it themselves; and if nothing would do, they could have cast it to the door: and if *Elisba* had gone through all their houses and healed their waters they had fetched in in their vessels, it would have been a short-lived kindness to them; for when that had been spent, they would have been just where they were before: but *Elisba* goes to the spring, casts in the salt there, and miraculously heals it; and this sets him on high in their esteem. The application is easy, to Christ's healing of our corrupt natures.

3. There is a generation who are easily diverted from the pursuit of an interest in Christ. If they can get it with ease, well and good it is; but if not, they will let it go: *Prov. xxi. 25. The desire of the slothful killeth him: for his hands refuse to labour.* Hence when conscience is awakened with some, they will cry for an interest in Christ; they will follow religion with some vigour for a while, but not finding that sweetness in religion that they expected, their tired souls fall even asleep again in the lap of their lusts. As when the Lord brought his people out of *Egypt*, there was a mixed multitude, that were not *Israelites*, who went out with them, *Exod. xii. 38.*: they would stay no longer in *Egypt*, but away with that happy people to the happy land flowing with milk and honey. But when they came to the wilderness, and found not what they expected, they fell a lusting, *Num. xi. 4.* and downwards; the heat of their hearts after

Canaan

Canaan was cooled, and many a rueful look they gave back to *Egypt* again. And the very fish, leeks, and onions of *Egypt*, that they had eaten there, were sweeter to them than all the milk and honey of *Canaan*, which they thought they were never like to taste; as appears from the complaints of the *Israelites*, which they learned from that *Egyptian* rabble, *vers.* 5. 6. Such cannot rejoice in Christ; he is not to them either only or fully suitable. But if thou art one that rejoiceth in Christ, thou hast, like *Caleb* and *Joshua*, another spirit, even to follow the Lord fully, *Numb.* xiv. 24. Such will leave no mean unessayed in order to get an interest in Christ. It is a matter of the greatest weight, and necessity has no law. Hunger will break through stone walls, *Mark* vii. 24. If they must die, they will die at Christ's door, knowing with the lepers, *2 Kings* vii. 4. that if they go back to the city whence they came, the famine is in that city, and they will die there: and therefore they will put on *Ruth's* generous resolution, *Ruth* i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; being as she stedfastly minded, or, as the word is, strengthening herself, to wit, against all the discouragements and temptations she had to go back.*

4. There is a generation that was never brought to be content to part with all for Christ, and to have him on any terms. There is still some idol that is dearer to them than to part with at any rate. Such a one was that young man, *Mark* x. 21. 22. *Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.* He loved eternal life well, and therefore went away sorrowful; but he loved the world better, and therefore he went away. These cannot rejoice in Christ as only and fully suited to their case. If ye saw a man priggling in a market, and resolved not to have the commodity at the rate proposed, ye would conclude, that that man either can want it, or he knows how to get his want supplied another way. In that *John* vi. 66. we find some going away from Christ: hereupon Christ puts the question to the twelve, *vers.* 67. *Will ye also go away?* Mark *Peter's* answer, *vers.* 68. *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou*

thou hast the words of eternal life. As if he had said, Lord, it seems those that have gone away think they can fend without thee: but as for us, how can we go away? for if we abide not with thee, we know of no other door to go to, where our wants can be supplied; and therefore go who will, we must abide. Now, when a man is brought to this, he must needs put a blank in Christ's hand, as *Paul*, Acts ix. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* He will be ready to part with all with heart and good will. If he rejoice in Christ as the *treasure hid in the field*, for joy thereof he will sell all, that the field and treasure may be his, *Matth. xiii. 44.* From all which it appears, that there are but few who have got this view of Christ as suitable to their case. But happy are they who have got it. *The election hath obtained it, but the rest were blinded.*

Thirdly, Christ is suited to the saints *mind*. And if it were not so, they could not rejoice in him. Christ is very suitable to the *case* of every unbeliever, *Rev. iii. 18.* but, alas! he is not suited to their *minds*; and therefore they cannot rejoice in him, more than a child in the cutting off of a leg or arm, which yet may be very suitable to its case. Give a natural man his idols, the drunkard his cups, the unclean person his queans, the proud and ambitious man honour, the covetous man his clay-god the world, these are suitable to his *mind*; but as unsuitable to his *case*, as a sword for a mad man's hand, or poison for a sick man. But Christ is not only suited to the believer's *case*, but to his *mind*; for he is by grace made *partaker of the divine nature*. Christ is that *stone*, which though *disfallowed of men*, is yet *chosen of God*, and *precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 4. *Unto you therefore who believe he is (also) precious.* There is not a child of God but Christ answers the desires of their souls in breadth and length, *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* There is none beside him, none like him, none after him to the believer. [I have read a story of the king of *Armenia's* son, whose wife being taken captive by *Cyrus*, was asked by the conqueror what ransom he would give for her. Truly, says he, I would redeem her even with my own life. She being set free, and they all come home in peace, some commended *Cyrus* for one thing, some for another, all admiring him. The king's son asks his wife, what she thought of him. Truly, says she, I did not so much as look on him. Whom looked you on then? says he. On him, replied she, who

who said he would redeem me with his own life. Thus Christ becomes a covering of the eyes unto those who behold his glory by faith]. He is just the person their soul desireth: if they had their choice to make a thousand times, it would still be none but Christ. For to them he is altogether lovely, or, wholly desires, Cant. v. ult.: he is most desirable; every thing in or about him is desirable to them. I shall only point at three things wherein Christ is suited to the minds of the saints, and to none others.

1. They are pleased at the heart, that he, even he, should build the temple of the Lord, and that he should bear the glory, as is appointed of God, Zech. vi. 12. 13. The great design of the gospel is, to exalt free grace in Christ; and grace runs through every vein of this contrivance: and as nature is contrary to it, so grace casts the soul into the same mould, Matth. xi. 5. *The poor have the gospel preached to them; the poor are gospelled* (if our language would bear it). The gospel comes to their ears, and goes down to their hearts, and changes them into the same image; and they are delivered into that form of doctrine, (as the margin hath it), Rom. vi. 17.; even as melted metal cast into molds comes out with the impression and figure on it. Alluding to that which David said to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 8. 9. I may say, the saints think it not meet that the first Adam should build the temple of the Lord, because he has shed blood abundantly, at once murdered himself and all his posterity, and has had great wars with heaven; but their souls go alongst with that, that the temple be built by that Son of his, Luke iii. 23.—38.; the man Christ, typified by Solomon, who was the only man of rest among all the sons of Adam, since their father put them out of rest in God; and who can give peace and quietness to Israel. See how the Psalmist sings to this glorious building, Psal. lxxxix. 1. 2. *Mercy shall be built, said I.* There is no merit of men in this building; it is a building of pure mercy; and the building shall go on still, by laying one mercy above another, and that for ever. It is pleasing to the heart of the saints, to be proclaimed dyvors to raile the glory of the Redeemer's love, to be drowned in the debt of free grace, and to have the advantage of an eternity to acknowledge it in, Psal. lxxxix. 1.; to throw down their righteousness and their unrighteousness together, to be stepping-stones to his glory, and that on which he may mount his throne; to be nothing, and worse than nothing, that Christ may be all. This suits not the

minds of natural men. He is the *stone which the builders disallowed*: they were so far from allowing him to be the *chief corner-stone*, that they laid him by as a stone unfit to have so much as the least place in it. And Peter says, 1 epist. ii. 7. 8. he is a *stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to the disobedient*, or them that believe not; and all natural men are such. Yea, and Christ himself pronounces them *blessed*, who having him in their offer, are not *offended* in him, do not see something in him that they cannot away with, *Matth. xi. 6. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* And therefore, let men deceive themselves as they will, and contradict this as they please, *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* None but the saints of God are thus pleased with him, as will further appear by what I shall offer next.

2. They are pleased at the heart with his *laws*. They rejoice in him as a *Lawgiver*, as well as a *Saviour*: *Isa. xxxiii. 22. The Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.* All the saints, and they only, would vote the government to be laid on his shoulders, on whom the Father has laid their help. Christ makes such a reasonable proposal to sinners, as *Jephthah* did to the *Gileadites*, *Judg. xi. 9. If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me; shall I be your head?* and all whose hearts the Lord has touched, will heartily acquiesce therein, to wit, that Christ being their *head* to save them, he be also their *head* to rule them. Christ's yoke is welcome to them in every part of it, so far as they know it to be his; his law is suitable to their minds, because their minds and hearts, by the power of grace, are suited to the law, *Psal. cxix. 128. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way*: for the law is written in their hearts, *Heb. viii. 10.*; there are gracious inclinations wrought in their souls towards the several parts of that purity and holiness which is required by the law. For as the law is a sort of transcript of the nature of God, (wherein God shews what a one he is, and what is pleasing to him), so they are made *partakers of the divine nature*, *2 Pet. i. 4.* But because this *partaking of the divine nature* is but imperfect in this present state of the saints, and there is in them an unregenerate part as well as a regenerate, therefore the *sin that dwelleth in them*, will have its reluctancy against the sweet yoke of Christ: but it is only a partial reluctancy, not total; seeing there is a principle of grace within them likewise, that approves and embraces the

the law as holy, and the commandment as holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. But this is far from the wicked, even the most refined hypocrite, who always find in the yoke of Christ, some *stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*; some part of holiness, not only that they cannot attain, but that their hearts are never reconciled with; otherwise the Psalmist had laid an unsure ground of comfort to himself in that, *Psal. cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.* Both the godly and ungodly man will readily be found to have some sin which the heart cleaveth to by others, or cleaveth to them more than other sins; which is like *El's*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. *the iniquity which he knoweth.* Let the trial be made herein, and it will be found, that the lust, and not the law, is suited to the minds of most men; and that they would bestow the blood of their bodies in the matter to blot out that lust-crossing command out of the law, rather than find the efficacy of Christ's blood killing and utterly carrying off that law-crossing lust; desiring rather to have the law brought down to them in the point, than themselves brought up to the law. And it will be found contrariwise, in those that rejoice in Christ, to whose minds he is suited, and to whom his laws that directly fly in the face of those lusts that do so easily encompass them, are as chains of gold about their necks, which they love, and approve, and embrace; whereas they are to others as iron fetters; Rom. vii. 12. 22. 23. 24. and viii. 7.

3. Their hearts are well pleased with that *fulness* of the Spirit of sanctification that dwells in him to be communicated; and that the Father has appointed him to be the head of influences, 1 Cor. i. 30. 31. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us—sanctification—: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* And thus they will be found to rejoice more in the grace of God without them in Christ, than the very grace of God within them: as he whose own the well is, rejoiceth more in the spring, than all his vessels full of it; though a stranger will rejoice more in the fulness of the vessel given him, than the fulness of the fountain which is not his. *Thy Spirit is good,* (says the Psalmist), *lead me into the land of uprightness,* Psal. cxliiii. 10. O but the Spirit is good in the saints eyes, and it is good that the fulness of the Spirit is lodged in him. To whom sin is hateful, and the spirit of the world an unwelcome guest, the Spirit of holiness must needs

needs be precious : where the power and stain of sin are loathsome, as well as the guilt heavy, the water that came out of Christ's side, will be suited to their minds, as well as the blood. Where the love of God dwells, the Spirit will be precious, as that whereby they are *changed into the same image from glory to glory.* And as the Father hath appointed him head of influences, as the great channel of conveyance of spiritual influences, so do they acquiesce in that, by chusing him as such to them, *Hos. i. ult. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land.* But seeing in others the spirit of the world reigns, the Spirit of holiness is not suited to their minds : for *what agreement hath light with darkness ? or what pleasure can an owl take in the sun, that hates the light ? or they whose hearts are glued to sin, take in that which is destructive thereto ?* Yea, and that seeming holiness which some natural men attain to, is but the product of nature, assisted with external revelation, and the common operations of the Spirit, while they remain estranged from the life of God through Jesus Christ, who is the life of the saints. It is not among nature's inclinations to go out of itself for sanctification ; but nature's way here is for a man to go in to himself for it. The way of gospel sanctification, as well as of justification, is a stumbling-block in the way of unbelievers, *1 Cor. i. 23. 30.* See how they stumbled at it, *John vi. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* Compared with *vers. 63. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing : the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* But mark *vers. 60. 66. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it ? From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* That soul whose choice is the humble dependent life on Christ as the head of influences, going out of itself for sanctification to Christ in the way of believing, is a happy soul. See how the text joins these together, *worshipping God in spirit, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus,* as the altar of burnt-offering where the fire continually burns, which they may fetch to set to the incense of their duties. And so much for the first thing in this rejoicing, which is the main thing. I shall be more brief in the rest, which do of course follow on this holy complacency

complacency of the soul in Christ, and the mystery of Christ.

SECONDLY, Then there is in this rejoicing in Christ, a *rolling of the soul over on him for all. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* The child of God beholding him suited to the *divine perfections*, to his *case*, and to his *mind*, goeth out to him, and embraceth him accordingly, laying the whole stress of his soul upon him, taking him joyfully for his case. This is intimated to us in the parable of the *treasure hid in a field*: *the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field*, *Matth. xiii. 44.* The gospel is that field, and Christ is the treasure. Observe, (1.) To whomsoever the gospel comes, they may have Christ if they will; he offers himself in it. For the treasure is in the field, and the field and treasure are to be sold. (2.) Few see the glory and excellency of Christ held forth in the gospel, and therefore he and his gospel too are slighted. Many go over the field, but find no treasure in it, behold not the riches of the glory of the mystery of Christ, and hidden wisdom of God, therein; and therefore say, what is that field more than another, *that beloved more than another beloved?* (3.) Whensoever the glory of Christ is discovered to a soul, that soul is pleased with him, beholds him as an up-making portion; so as the man concludes, that if he had him, he would have enough in him. For he has joy thereof on the discovery, and is willing to part with all for it. (4.) That soul will not rest till the happy bargain be made, and Christ be his, *Ruth iii. ult.* (5.) That soul quits the gripe of all other to live on Christ, to take him for and instead of all; he lays his all upon the treasure: if it hold good, he has all; if it should fail, he has nothing. From that time that treasure is all his stock, all that he has to licken to. Happy that soul that thus rejoiceth in Christ. That is the wise man, who digs till he comes to the rock, and then with joy builds on it. The soul finds it has a heavy weight of wants, weakness, and miseries, which it is neither able to bear nor throw off; but finding that Christ is every way suitable to such a one's case, and hearing such a comfortable voice of Christ in the gospel, as the old man in *Gibeah* gave to the *Levite*, while he sat in the street of the city, and no man offered to take him into his house, *Let all thy wants lie upon me*, *Judg. xix. 18. 20.* the soul heartily complies with the offer, and casts all its burdens on Christ for time and eternity, *Psal. lv. 22.*; and especially these two.

1. Their weight of guilt.

2. Their weight of duties.

First, Their weight of *guilt* is laid over upon him *through faith in his blood*, Rom. iii. 25. Guilt is a heavy load, able to sink the soul into the lowest hell; but the soul comes as the offerer under the law, and lays its hand on the head of the sacrifice, thereby casting over this weight on a crucified Christ. They come with their polluted souls to the *blood of sprinkling*, that *speaks* mercy, and *speaks* away wrath from the guilty creature, Heb. xii. 24. Christ is the *city of refuge*; and thither they go, and throw themselves into it, as the only place suitable for them to dwell in, Heb. vi. 18. All without this city of refuge is under the dominion of the law; there death reigns; there justice is doing, and ready to do more execution; there floods run sweeping away the refuges of lies; there the heavens are black, the windows of heaven opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, and a broken law without intermission raining curses on the guilty heads. Wherefore the soul at first makes haste to escape, as Lot was bidden to do to get out of Sodom; and throwing itself into Christ as the city of refuge, the only place where no wrath can fall on the guilty, carefully abides there, and dare not set out its head without the gates for ever, Psal. xci. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* Vers. 2. *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge.* I have said, I do say it, and will ever say it, that *he is my refuge*, to whom I will betake myself, and under whose protection I may be safe, as the chickens under the wings of the hen, as the word the Holy Ghost here useth is explained, Ruth ii. 12. *The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.* And thus Christ himself holds out that safe covert of his righteousness and grace, which he offers to sinners in the gospel, Matth. xxiii. 37. *How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!* They are weak, and in hazard of being made a prey; but under the wings of his grace they may find safety, tender affection, and cherishing for their desolated souls, Psal. xci. 4.; and therefore come they to *trust under his wings*. His blood is the only propitiation to which they lippen their souls, his righteousness their only cover, his satisfaction their only plea, or ground on which they will plead mercy, his payment of the debt their only plea

plea for their discharge; for they have had the sentence of death in themselves carried and thrust home into their souls by the law, that they might trust in him who raiseth the dead, while others keep up their confidence in the flesh. Such the Lord pronounceth blessed, *Matth. v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

Secondly, Their weight of duties is laid over on him.

1. For performance. Christ lays his yoke upon the believer, and he receives it, and lays himself and it over on himself again as the fountain of strength: *Matth. xi. 29. Take my yoke upon you, (says Christ), and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* And says the Psalmist, *Psal. cxvi. 9. 10. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken.* Hence it becomes a sweet and easy yoke, which before was a burden unsupportable. How can that be? Why, duties are indeed a dead weight while laid on purely by the hand of the law, and borne merely by virtue of the poor remains of that strength which the first Adam left us; which in effect is but mere weakness, and cannot make us bear it more than a child can bear a mountain, *John xv. 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* But as for the yoke of Christ, it is laid on with a promise of strength, and with it is laid into the heart a principle of rolling over the soul and it on Christ again: *Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ, (says the Apostle): Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* And so he bears the heavy end of his own yoke, and bears them and their burden too. Thus the believer has (to speak with reverence) a kind of derived omnipotency, *Philip. iv. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure,* Chap. ii. 13. He works the will for the work, and the work for us when he has wrought the will for it. A vast weight may be on a little stone in a building, without its sinking, when it, and all that is on it, lies upon a rock. And hence the 11th chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews* is spent in shewing the mighty things the saints have done and suffered by faith. For in a believer there is a most suitable match, sufficiency joined with insufficiency, *2 Cor. iii. 5.* strength with weakness, all fulness with wants and poverty; even the mighty God with worm Jacob. And thus the believer goes out

out of himself for performance of duties, while the hypocrite goes in to himself. For it is a plain truth, that the way and manner of working follows the manner of being and living, and every man will act as he lives. Now, the believer lives by Christ, *John vi. 57.* and therefore must act by him; and with the same care will endeavour to hold off lippering to his own strength, as to his own righteousness, *Psal. lxxi. 16.*; and to take Christ for sanctification, as well as for righteousness, God having made him both to his people. Natural men are *without Christ, i. e.* separate from him, *John xv. 5.*; and so are as trees by themselves, having their own root in the ground: and hence for the fruit of duty all the natural powers of their souls are called together as in a solemn day, *Josh. xxiv. 18. 19.*; but because their root is rottenness, their blossom goes up as dust; and their fruits are like the apples of Sodom, which are very pleasant to the eye, but being cut up, are found nothing but a heap of loathsome matter; and no wonder, seeing they grow by the dead sea of self. But the godly are branches whose fruit depends on influence from Christ, as the true vine into which they are ingrafted: hence the bent of the believer's soul lies that way, not to trust his natural powers, gifts, nay nor inherent graces either; seeing these depend on Christ, as light on the sun, and are but rays, not the fountain of light, and therefore must still be fed from the fountain; but to go out of himself, in the way of believing, *Philip. iv. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* And therefore, while others like common boatmen serve themselves with their oars, seeing they never go out of the barren region of self; they will depend on Christ for the blowings of his Spirit, having a mind for *Immanuel's* land.

2. For acceptance of their duties, *Heb. xi. 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.* God in Christ is the alone object of the saints worship. The saints labour in duties which is accepted, is a *labour of love*, *Heb. vi. 10.* Our love to God is but the reflex of God's love to us, *1 John iv. 19.* God's special love to us darts its beams unto us no other way but through the veil of the flesh of Christ; and it must be through the same veil that our love returns to him, and itself and its fruits accepted, *Eph. i. 6.* Duties rightly done and acceptably, are the returns of influences from heaven; which are communicated through Christ, who lies at the fountain-head, as the great mean of communion betwixt God and the saints: and as influences come

come from God by him, so the duty is directed to God through him. As God will not accept, so the saints acting as saints dare not offer for acceptance, prayer, or praise, but through him, *Eph. i. 3.*; nor any good work, though it were a sacrifice of their own blood, but as dipt, yea, *washed in the blood of the Lamb*, *Rev. vii. 14.* They will not expect any of their sacrifices to be accepted, but such as are laid on the altar Christ, which sanctifies the gift. Here the stiffs is laid for acceptance by the saints; to which the view they have of God's holiness, the naughtiness of their own and their best duties, their complacency in God's method of grace, and contrivance of salvation through Christ, and that gospel-turn that grace has given their hearts, do determine them; while the natural man is a stranger and blind to all these, and so rushes forward to the throne with his duties, not honouring the Son, and thereby dishonouring the Father; for worshipping in the name of Christ, is no less than faith in his blood.

THIRDLY, In this rejoicing in Christ there is *a rest of the heart in him as a fit match for the soul*. For as in marriage there is, in the first place, a view of such a person as a fit match, whereupon follows the choice and acceptance; and in case the person chosen answer the expectation, (and none can ever have too high thoughts of Christ), there ariseth from thence a rest of the heart in such a person, which is the solid joy of that lot, *Ruth iii. 1. Prov. xxxi. 11.*: so when the soul is pleased with Christ as every way suitable, it rolls itself over on him, and rests in him as a fit match. Our first father *Adam* did us two ill turns: He led us off the path of life, not knowing how to get on it again; and so left us with a conscience full of guilt. He led us away from the living God, not knowing how to get to him again; and so left us with a heart full of unsatisfied desires. Hence the sons of *Adam* quickly find themselves like the *horseleech having two daughters*, crying, *Give, give*; a restless conscience, and a restless heart; to each of which they must needs say, *Shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?* And so the soul sets to work; and the first way it goes, is, *through dry places, seeking rest*, as the devil when he goes out of a man. And,

1. For the conscience; the natural man goes through the dry and barren region of the law, seeking rest to it, *going about to establish his own righteousness*, *Rom. x. 3.* The sun is gone down on them, and therefore they light their candles,

dles, and compass themselves about with their own sparks. And in what measure that restlessness has seized their consciences, so far do they go the round of law-obedience to still it. The consciences of some are easily lulled asleep; a few coldrife wishes will do it with some; some shreds of morality serve to wrap others in, in which they can lie at peace; others can get no rest till they go the round of all the external duties of religion; nay, so restless are the consciences of some, that it will cost them to do *many things*, with *Herod*, to remove many beloved lusts that keep the conscience unquiet, to water the couch with tears, and lull it asleep with mournful songs of prayers and confessions, to bind it down with vows, resolutions, and engagements of reformation, and after all carefully to watch against those things that disturbed it before. And yet for all this, because it is not sprinkled with blood, it can get no solid rest; it gets but an unsound nap, out of which it will have a fearful awakening. It is still but *as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast*, Prov. xxiii. 34. Now, Christ finds his elect in this same case, seeking rest to their consciences in the law: and whatever rest they may sometimes find in it, he doth at length set fire to their nest, and draw that pillow from under their head, till he make them effectually despair of ever finding rest there to their consciences, whose wounds bleed still, and spurn all remedy from their best and most serious duties; and then discovers to them, and by his Spirit draws them, so as they come to the blood of sprinkling, the only conscience-purging remedy: And here the soul finds rest to the conscience: *Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Chap. xii. 24. *Ye are come—to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* 1 John i. 7.—*And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* The conscience rests in him; of which before in the second head. But that which I aim at here, is,

2. The rest of the *heart*; which the natural man and the Christian both seek: but the soul out of Christ never finds it; only they that are in Christ find it, and find it in him. For clearing of which, consider,

1st, Our hearts naturally are full of desires of happiness, which crave satisfaction. Even when *desire fails*, Eccles.

xii. these are still fresh and vigorous ; and a man shall as soon cease to be a man, as cease to desire to be a happy man. The heart of man is an empty craving thing, of a large capacity. And wants are so interwoven with our nature, and desires of the supply of these wants, that man seems to be little else but a compound of wants and desires, which are enlarged as the ocean. Heap together unto Christless hearts all perfections that are to be found in all the men of the earth, increase the heap to them with all that is to be found in other creatures, all would be overwhelmed with a vast infinite mass of wants, as a siling of gold under a mountain ; and their desires after all remain wide as the sea, seeing the soul, by its natural make and constitution, is capable of an infinite good. Ye shall as soon tell the moles that appear restlessly flying through a new-swept house, where the beams of the sun are let in, number the stars, and tell to the last grain of sand by the sea shore, as ye shall come to the last desire of a man's hearty if you keep off an infinite good. Behold, with what a wide mouth the heart of man appears : satisfied it must be, or it can have no rest ; but where will it find an answerable fulness ? Peace and rest they would have ; but, alas ! *the way of peace they have not known*, Rom. iii. 17. ; *there is none that seeketh after God*, vers. 14. *though their throat is an open sepulchre*, vers. 13. standing always open, crying, *Give, give*, and never saying, *It is enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. Hence,

2dly, The natural man goeth through the dry places of the creation, seeking rest, but findeth none (*Jer. ii. 13.*) to his restless heart. They are bewildered travellers, that have lost their way ; they *wander in the wilderness* of created things, but *find no city to dwell in ; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainteth in them* : for Solomon hits their miserable case, and plainly shews how the matter is with them, *Eccl. x. 15. The labour of the foolish weareth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city*. The man goes about extracting the sweet of every created thing he can reach for satisfaction, squeezeth the sap out of them ; but they will not, cannot answer his expectation. They are in quest of satisfaction ; but are in that case as the *Sodomites* at *Lot's house* when struck with blindness, where all were for the door, but one gripes one part of the wall for it, another gripes another part, never one of them could find it. Some fix on the profits of the world, and drink greedily at these broken cisterns ; their hungry hearts fly at them as a ravenous bird

at the prey, *Prov. xxiii. 5.* And the cream and strength of their affections are spent on these; and yet at length they find they are but *spending their labour for that which is not bread, II. iv. 2.* Some hang at the breasts of the world's pleasures, lawful or unlawful; and often press so hard for satisfaction in these, that they wring out blood instead of milk; and as men hammering at a flinty rock for water, bring forth fire from it flashing on their faces. The man is like the hungry beast, which, if it abide within the hedge, rives up all to the red earth; neither doth that satisfy, but they break over the hedge too, if so be the forbidden fruit can afford that rest, which that which is allowed cannot. Some pursue *the lust of the eye*, but that is never satisfied with seeing; some, *the lust of the flesh*, and the more it is gratified, the more it craves; and some, *the pride of life*, and that can never be satisfied, *Hab. ii. 5. Is. v. 14.* Some soar a little above the common gang of mankind; and they seem to espy in knowledge what is not to be found in other things, and their souls fly out in an eager pursuit after satisfaction in that, which indeed bids fairest for it among all created things: but what comes it to at length? The soul finds the way to it *fore travel, Eccl. i. 13.*; and after they have travelled far and sore for it, their hearts are stung with these questions, *Job xxviii. 12. But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?* *vers. 20. 21. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.* And what scraps of it are gathered here and there, are far from giving the promised rest to the heart: *Eccl. i. ult. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* Thus men labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity. The world is like the air in a summer-day full of insects; and natural men are like a company of foolish children, one running to catch one, another to catch another; and when all is done, none of them can fill the hand. And O how humbling is it to think, that after the restless heart is disappointed in real enjoyments, it goes about to satisfy and feed itself with mere fancies; so that the imagination is let loose, and, like quicksilver, rolls and runs hither and thither, skips like a bird from bush to bush, forms to itself a thousand airy nothings, traverses the world, and turns the man into a thousand fine shapes, giving the man a multitude of possessions, if not possessions of

of the hand, yet possessions of the heart, as that word properly signifies, *Job xvii. 11.*; as if the foolish heart, when it had tried all other means in vain, would strive to dream itself full and happy? But when that *wandering of the desire*, or *walking of the soul*, is stopped, *Eccl. vi. 9. he awaketh, and behold, his soul is faint.* But will the tired soul sit down and rest after all? No, no, *Jf. lvii. 10.*; but goes back again to the same door where it has got a hundred refusals. O, thinks the man, if I had such a thing, I would be well. May be he gets it; but he finds for as big as it was afar off, it will not fill his hand, when he gripes it; but it must be filled, or no rest: hence new labour, to bring forth new disappointments without end.

3dly, Christ finds the elect soul, in the day of converting grace, thus wandering, and seeking rest among the rest of the blinded world, brings it to despair of ever finding it there, discovers himself to it as the fountain of satisfaction, as he opened *Hagar's* eyes to see the well when she had laid by the child for death. And then the man hears a voice in the innermost part of his soul, from Christ, by his Spirit, *Psal. lxxx. 10. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* "I can do and will do for you what all the creatures cannot; I will fill you. Many a time you have opened your mouth wide enough to your idols, so wide, that it has been no small pain to get it closed again, and yet still empty; but now open it to me, I will fill it. Lay the mouth of your soul on the breasts of my consolations, and they shall flow abundantly." The word for believing comes from a root that signifies *to nurse*; as if faith were nothing else but the laying of the soul on the breasts of Christ's consolations, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, that they may suck, and be satisfied, *Jf. lxvi. 11.* And truly the soul is like the hungry infant, that gapes, weeps, cries, sucks every thing that comes near its mouth; yet cannot tell what it would have, but is still restless, till the mother set it to the breast; and then it rests: and so doth the believing soul in Christ. The heaven-born soul is seeking a match for itself, but cannot find it among all the creatures; none of them are commensurable to the desires of the soul; there is always something wanting to satisfaction in every thing the soul meets with, till it come to Christ; and there the soul finds at length a match for it in its enlarged desires, and so takes up its everlasting rest in him; and, after many years restlessness and watching, falls asleep in the bosom of God in Christ,

Christ, in whom they *have all, and abound*; for coming to him, they come to the utmost of their desires. Ye may take up the rest of the heart in Christ in these two particulars.

1. The desires of the soul *centering and meeting in Christ*. *Unite my heart*, says the Psalmist, *Psal. lxxxvi. 11*. The heart naturally is as it were in a thousand pieces, each of them following some one or another vanity; and the desires of the heart, like a flock of hungry ravening fowls, are scattered on the face of the earth, crying and catching what they can get, till a crucified Christ, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead, is discovered by an eye of faith; and then where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together, *1 Cor. ii. 2.*; and then as the scattered rays of the sun are contracted in the burning-glass, and fix on one thing, so the desires of the soul are brought to meet in one point, even in him, *Psal. xxvii. 4. Luke x. 41. 42*. The heart is never right till it come to this; for while the natural man's heart is in its blind ramble in quest of happiness, and his desires are sent out to bring it in from all quarters, no wonder some of them stumble upon Christ, as those *John vi. 34*. who said unto Christ, *Lord, evermore give us this bread*: seeing they have a double heart, a heart, and a heart, why may not Christ get one, while the world and lusts keep another? But that is not the rest of the heart in Christ, the desires of the heart not meeting in him, but parted between him and others. As *Jacob* found his marriage with *Leah* and *Rachel* both, not a rest, but a rack to his heart; so shall the divided heart ever be found a restless heart.

But, alas! may some say, *I find indeed desires in my heart going out after Christ; but as true it is, there are many desires in it going another way, yea, a contrary way. Can such a heart be said to rejoice and rest in Christ?* For answer to this, consider, that as faith is not perfected in this life, so neither is the believer's rejoicing and resting in Christ. The flesh hath its desires as well as the spirit, which surely go another way than to Christ: *Gal. v. 17. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* And therefore though they that believe do enter into rest, and they that come to Christ do even find rest in him here, yet there remains a rest to the people of God, which they shall get in heaven. But to clear this case, consider,

1st, In what channel runs the main stream of thy desires? Though a river may on each side have its small strands that run very irregularly, yet we account the main stream and channel that wherein the several brooks that make it up do meet. And thus in the child of God, though there may be many irregular desires, yet the main stream of desire in them goes Christ-ward and God-ward. The Psalmist wanted not desires of the flesh; yet, says he, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple*, Psal. xxvii. 4. because it was the main thing. In the natural man it is quite contrary; his main desires are after the world and his lusts, the bent of his soul lies that way, the strength of his affections are spent on these, so that there is nothing left for Christ but a few languishing desires, that bear no more proportion to his desires after other things, than a little side-stream to the main stream of the water. Thus the Psalmist distinguishes himself from natural men, *Psal. iv. 6. 7. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased*. But remember I am now speaking of desires after Christ as a rest to the heart, not as a rest to the conscience; for seeing *skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life*, the terrors of a restless conscience may make the chief stream of desire go after Christ for rest to the conscience, as the foolish virgins when they saw their lamps were gone out, and the bridegroom coming, left all their other trafficking wherein they had spent their former time, and went to buy oil, *Matth. xxv*. And this leads me to a

2^d thing. Consider whether or not thine absolute desires do center and meet in Christ. If ye were left this day to your free choice, never to be called to an account for it whatever way ye made it, either Christ or lusts, on whom would your desires meet, where would they center? Is there so much native beauty, and glory, and fulness for heart-satisfaction seen by you in Christ, as would draw your desires after him? ye are the virgins whose heart Christ has, *Cant. i. 3*. Let the natural man's desires after Christ be never so strong, I may well say, they do not so much desire him because they would have him, as because they cannot want him: they do in this what they would not, and therefore it

is not they that do it, but conscience that dwelleth in them. And on the contrary, the saints have their desires after lusts; but so complying with them, do what they would not; and therefore it is not they, but sin that dwelleth in them.

3dly, Consider what are those desires in thy heart that swallow up all other, as the sea in which all the rivers do meet? If thou can say, it is the desires after Christ in thy heart, thou art one that rejoiceth and resteth in Christ, and a real saint: *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* In the heart of a saint there are other sheaves besides Christ's sheaf, but all others must bow to his. Do thy desires after Christ rebound on thy desires after other things, towards the weakening and wearing them off? though ye see ye come but little speed, it is a good sign: *Rom. vii. 22. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.* Compared with *vers. 24. O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* The godly soul may have many woful desires, but the heart would be content to deny itself of all of them, if it could be rid of them, for Christ. But on the contrary, the natural man's desire after other things than Christ, swallows up all other, like *Pharaoh's* lean kine eating up the fat ones, and yet still lean. His desires of Christ must yield to his desires of lusts; seeing the hungry heart craves satisfaction, and they never yet found as much sweetness to the heart in Christ, as they have found in other things; and therefore would judge it but a sorry bargain to sell all for the one pearl; and their souls are never content to part with all for Christ, as was the case with the young man, *Mark x. 21. 22.*

2. The desires of the heart *abiding on him for satisfaction.* The soul, after long wandering amongst the creatures for satisfaction, at length seeing through them, beholds that all is vain and unsatisfactory; and beholding the fulness of Christ by faith, lays hold on him, and rests in him as an object adequate to the desires of the heart, as one that is match for the boundless desires of the soul, and in whom it may be filled: *Psal. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire BESIDES THEE.* And thus the soul is brought at length to an utmost of its desires; there they terminate as on an object completely satisfactory. This is their rest, and here they will stay. Here is the treasure hid, and here will they halt and dig for it. This is the city which they find to rest in; there

will

will they abide; and there, and no where else, will they seek a place wherein to dwell. This rest of the heart in Christ, is sometimes in some of God's children screwed up far higher, when they are filled as with marrow and with fat, in the sensible enjoyment of him; yea and have as much as they can hold in this frail state; when they are filled with joy in believing, even joy unspeakable and full of glory; beholding the unsearchable boundless riches of Christ; and assuredly know that all is theirs, then they can say with *Paul, Philip*. iv. 18. *I have all, and abound.* But this is too high to be a mark of a saint, and would leave most part of them at most times out of the roll of saints. But he whose desires abide on Christ for satisfaction, has taken up his rest in him; for he can say with *David, This is all my desire, although he make it not to grow*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The heart could be content with Christ alone, but nothing can content it without him. And this does so far dry up the devouring deeps of carnal desires, wherewith the soul was before plagued, whose gaping mouths it was the man's constant work to seek to satisfy, that the soul never goes abroad for satisfaction among the creatures in such manner as it was wont. Christ becomes to the soul a covering of the eyes, as *Abraham* was to *Sarah*; and a draught of the water of life quenches that scorching thirst they had before after creature-sweetness, *John* iv. 14. They give over the trade of begging at the creature's door, and the door of their lusts, seeing their hearts are persuaded there is *bread enough* in their Father's house, and to *spare*, *Luke* xv. 17. When the soul comes to Christ, it takes up its rest in him, saying, upon the discovery of him, as one was wont to say when rising from prayer, "Be closed now, O mine eyes, be closed; for henceforth shall ye never see a more lovely object." Hence,

1st, The gracious soul can be content with Christ alone, *Psal.* lxxiii. 25. forecited. This is plainly the attainment of all that attain to Christ. Every man that finds the treasure hid in the field, and the one pearl of great price, sells all he hath with joy to purchase them; which he could not do, if he could not be contented with the treasure and pearl alone. And by the want of this disposition of soul Christ discovered the hypocrisy of that young man spoke of *Mark* x. 21. For certainly that heart is divided that can have no contentment in Christ, unless it turn aside by the flocks of his companions also: it loves him not as a suitable match to the soul, seeing the heart cannot rest in him. Wherefore the

gracious soul sees that satisfaction in Christ, that it can live on him without its former lusts, *Prov. iii. 8. Hos. xiv. 8.*; yea and though all the things in the world be gone from him, while his God is not gone, his rest and rejoicing will be to the fore, *Hab. iii. 17. 18. John xvi. 22.*

2dly, Nothing can fill Christ's room with them, have what they will; the want of him squeezes the sap out of all other enjoyments to them, *Psal. xxx. 7.* As if a thousand cyphers were set together without a figure, the total will still be naught; so unto the gracious soul all without Christ is naught, because he is the rest of their hearts. Hence says the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* The worldly man's indefinite wish says, he is too easily pleased; it is *any good*, *Psal. iv. 6.*; it is any one he seeks it of: but the godly man's wish is very particular, *the light of thy countenance*; it is the Lord he seeks it of; the favour of God in Christ, or nothing. As the raven sent out of the ark missed not the ark while there was carrion enough without it, to feed on; so give natural men whereon to feed their lusts, and something to appease their conscience, they will reign as kings without Christ. These are their *good things*, *Luke xvi. 25.* But the heart of the child of God will say, Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go without thyself the chief good?

Quest. But doth the heart of a saint always thus rest in Christ? *Ans.* There is no doubt but sometimes one that has taken up his heart's rest in Christ, may fall off his rest, that he may have his soul to bespeak to return to his rest again. Saints may sometimes take up their rest under some created shadow, but they will not dwell there. *Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd*, chap. iv. 6. But even in this case there will be found a twofold difference betwixt them and natural men.

1. The saints never get such kindly rest as the natural man in these things. The reason is plain; the natural man is in his own element in that case, the saint is not. The natural man is as one who is at home in his own bed, the other is as one abroad, *2 Sam. xii. 4.* This is clear from the case of the spouse, *Cant. v. 2.* She is asleep, but it is very unkindly rest she gets. We may notice here three things that make it so. (1.) There is a thorn of self-condemnation

demnation in the conscience: *I sleep*; I am out of order, this is not the case I should be in. The soul is accused of ingratitude to Christ. Christ is at the door, he knocks, and has stood over-long. *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* says conscience. *Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?* says the Lord, *Jer. ii. 31.* And the man is speechless, like *Jonah*; of whom it may be observed, *Jonah iv. 10. 11.* that he answered not again; and like *Job*, chap. *xl. 5.* (2.) There is a wound of self-dissatisfaction in the heart, *My heart waketh.* There is a secret discontent with this condition, because the enjoyment of Christ is not in it. The little grace that is left frowns on corruption, though it is not able to master it. Such persons would be glad of Christ's return, though their souls are fettered that they cannot go after him, till he put in his hand by the hole of the lock. (3.) There is a faint moving of the affections after him: *It is the voice of my beloved.* He is the beloved still. Though the soul has written the bill of divorce, in fond affection to another, yet she would not sign it for ten thousand worlds. Though she is not able to rise to let him in, yet she cannot think of his going quite away. It is another sort of rest the natural man has in these things; where there is but one principle, to wit, that of corruption: so that whatever disquiet conscience may give him at a time, yet it is but a carnal defiled conscience, *Tit. i. 15.* and cannot disturb the heart's rest in lusts; as *Balaam's* conscience left still his heart in love with the wages of unrighteousness, *2 Pet. ii. 15.* though his conscience stood in his way of winning them. And though the heart of the natural man cannot be free of disquiet, seeing it is impossible to find satisfaction in the creatures; yet it is not because Christ is not in that case of his for the rest of his heart, but because the creature cannot answer the hungry appetite of his heart; yet though one cannot, he hopes another may, *Jf. lvii. 10.*: and so all that it amounts to, is, the sluggard turning him on his bed. Which brings me to a

2. Thing, namely, The Lord does always at length hunt the saint out of all his starting-places, till his soul return to its rest. Hence says he, *Hof. ii. 6. 7.* *Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with*

me than now. As the needle in the compass touched with a good loadstone, rests not till it turn towards the north; so the man who is partaker of the divine nature, and is born from above, will get no kindly rest with his affections on the earth; disturbed they will be, till they be set on things above. The saint for his heart's rest goes back to God from the creatures, *Jer. iii. 22. 23.*; the natural man for his goes from one creature to another; and when one stream runs dry, goes to another, being conjoined as it were within the circle of created things. For why, the curse of the serpent is on such persons; and though they may change their particular place, their holes of the earth, yet dust is their meat, and on their belly must they go. They want the seraphims wings, which grace gives the saints, and so never mount heavenward. We do not read of one among all the saints more like a bird that wandereth from his nest than *Solomon*. His father had warned him, *1 Chron. xxviii. 9.* to *serve the Lord with a perfect heart*, that is, according to the import of the word, a peaceable, quiet, entire heart, resting in God, not falling in pieces, and gauding after idols; and with a willing mind, a mind taking delight in God, without which the heart cannot lie at peace in him. But when *Solomon* grew old, his heart though it was sincere, yet it was not perfect with the Lord, *1 Kings xi. 4.* He fell off his rest in God, and went after idols, *vers. 5.* And many a door he went to, while he travelled through the creation, as his book of *Ecclesiastes* tells us; but he was repulsed at them all, and at length brought back again to God, with that report, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*. For though a son may vague a while, yet seeing his father has a house, he will grow wise at length, and return to it: *Psal. xc. 1.* *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations*; though sometimes they are not at home, but lodge elsewhere. But the common beggar must needs be still going from house to house, and so spend the time of his life, because he has no certain dwelling-place.

LASTLY, In this rejoicing in Christ there is a confession of him unto salvation: *Rom. x. 10.* *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*. This the word which the Apostle useth in the text, and properly signifies to glory in a thing, doth plainly intimate. And as the image of God that was impressed on man's soul in his creation did shine through his body, as the candle through the lantern; so that complacency,

placency, confidence, and rest of the heart in Christ, of which before, that in themselves are hidden things, will nevertheless shine forth in the saints outward conversation. There is such a dexterity that some hypocrites have in aping of God's children in their conversation, that it will be very difficult to know what to say in this point; which I profess I would rather hear of, than speak of. But being convinced the text intimates a difference, I dare not quite pass it; hoping the Lord that has laid it in the way, will give something that may be useful; though I would not have people to lay the main stress of their evidence of their state here, but to use it as an adminicle or help to let them in to the view of what lies more inwardly. I shall consider this holy glorying in Christ, and confession of him, with respect to mens ordinary conversation, and with respect to their conversation in suffering times; and I think the text looks to both.

First, With respect to the gracious soul's ordinary conversation.

1. This inward rejoicing in Christ wears off that air of pride and self-conceit, that is seen about many professors vainly puffed up with their fleshy mind. They will not only have humbleness of mind, but they will be *clothed with humility* as an upper garment, 1 Pet. v. 5. Whatever may be attributed to the natural temper of any, it is hard to think a saint will in his ordinary conversation shew such an air of vanity about him, as still to make him loathsome to tender and discerning Christians.

2. Grace will circumscribe the self-commending lips. *Boasters* are in the black roll with those that have but a *form of godliness*, 2 Tim. iii. 2. They that rejoice in Christ, feel such a weight of corruption in the heart, that it will be an imbargo on their tongue, to keep them from a course of *proclaiming their own goodness*, as *most men*, but not all men, not *faithful men*, do, Prov. xx. 6. But it is sad to think of the strain of many professors discourse, of their condition, abilities, attainments, &c.; where is not wanting still a far sacrifice to self, notwithstanding of acknowledgments of God's goodness in bestowing these on them; like the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11. *who stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

3. Gracious souls will readily discover in their serious converse, a native tendency in the strain of their discourse towards

towards the corruption of nature, and the riches and freedom, necessity and power of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. There is something charming in these things to them that rejoice in Christ. Nearest the heart, we say, nearest the mouth. Grief and love are two passions that mightily fix the mind on their objects. And the one is their greatest burden, the other their greatest support. And how can it be otherwise, seeing the great design of the gospel, into the mould of which they are cast, is to exalt Christ and free grace, and that upon the ruins of nature; to make Christ all, and the creature nothing, *Rom. iv. 16.* ? But there is a generation to whom these things in preaching are tasteless as the white of an egg. And in conversation they are knocked in the head with them; and are so far from entertaining others with these matters, that they cannot entertain them from others, unless it be by some general expressions, that it may be known they are not ignorant of these things, which they look upon as common things, and treat them as unclean. I think I observe in *Paul's* epistles a more than ordinary elevation of his spirit when he comes on these points. It is quite contrary in many professors, whose tongues are ready interpreters of the mind in matters of controversy, this and the other duty, opinion, enlargement, attainment, &c.; but when these come, they stumble and falter, because the heart runs not that way.

4. They will readily be found, as occasion offers, to be no strangers to heart-exercise about their state, whether they be in Christ or not, and will discover something of their experience that way; or if they do not, such converse as hits these things they will be ready to make welcome, and will not snuff at them, and weary of them, as if they were out of their element; for they *rejoice in Christ Jesus*; their life is in the *light of his countenance*, but it does not always shine to them. And therefore the question of the heart will be, *Cant. iii. 3. Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* But there are many who *have no changes*, and therefore *they fear not God*; and therefore, like *Gallio*, they care for none of those things; they are rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing that way. They have had a reel among their affections some time; and now they think they believe, and keep up the practice of religious duties, and there is an end of it. But for that part of religion that lies about the vitals of it, that is not their study, yea, and the hearing of it grates upon their ears.

5. Rejoicing

5. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus will make men tender of other Christians, in judging of them. Hence is that exhortation, *Gal. vi. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* The man that finds his own sore running on him, which leaves him no glorying but in Christ, will be fair to handle the sores of his brethren with a spirit of meekness, and be ready to bless God, that it was not he who was so left of the Lord. But that disposition of many, which makes them conclude people's hypocrisy from particular slips in their way, appears most opposite to this, and to be the product of self-confidence. And as they thus trample on those that are fallen below them, it will be found they very little honour or value those that are above them in spiritual tenderness and experience of religion, as if all were to be cut off that are beyond their measure: for the truth is, they are heart-enemies to the power of godliness; and where it shines most, especially outshining them, their carnal hearts rise most against it; and in such a case will readily pitch on their sores, and slightly say, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* *1 Sam. x. 11.* It is but *one in a place* (very few) that will say, *And who is their Father?* acknowledging heartily the free grace of God, that gives to every one as he will, whose eye is not evil, because the Lord's is good; but love the Lord's image where-ever they see it.

6. Such as rejoice in Christ will be found to have a peculiar converse with the word, and a peculiar relish of it on their spirits, according to the promise, *Is. lix. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* The Bible being the discovery of the heart of Christ towards sinners, the word on which he causeth them to hope, the magazine of their comfort, the sword of the Spirit only fit to repulse their doubts and fears, it is not to be doubted, but they will shew a peculiar respect to it as such. And it will be their book above all others; their book for heart-holiness, and not for bare head-knowledge; their book by which they desire to walk, and not only whereof they may talk. And those places which go most near to discover the naughtiness of man's nature, and the remedy thereof in Christ, will be
most

most prized; and the name of Christ crucified in it, the ointment that perfumes all.

7. *Lastly*, They will be found to have a peculiar respect to the place where his honour dwells, to the ordinances. If men rejoice in Christ Jesus in their hearts, it is not to be supposed but that in their conversation there will shine a peculiar respect to the galleries wherein Christ walks, the place where he records his name, and usually feeds his people. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. lxxiii. 1. 2. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* And because they have business there for eternity, for communion with God, and participation of his holiness, there will be something in their conversation there shewing them more kindly guests than others. It is an open confession of Christ, to worship him in the assemblies of his saints. I know not how they satisfy themselves that they rejoice in Christ Jesus, that rejoice not when it is said to them, *Let us go up to the house of the Lord*; how they satisfy themselves that they have an interest in the treasure, while they so little value the opening of the field to discover the treasure. The slighting of the ordinances, I suppose, will be found not to be at least the ordinary spot of God's people, according to the scriptures. And as for such of you as do not ordinarily attend the public ordinances, (as there are not a few such amongst us), be your impediment what it will, if it be not to your souls as the drawing of the hungry babe off the breast, your affliction, and not your choice, ye may be accounted slights of the treasure and the field both; as men may punctually attend all ordinances, and yet be far from rejoicing in the Lord of ordinances, and from any such joy shining out in their conversation about them. It is not every one that gathers the manna there, though it falls at the tent-doors of all alike. But that still remains a truth in the worst of times, that *God's words do good, to him that walketh uprightly*, Micah ii. 7. And it fares with gospel-hearers as it did with Jonathan's servant, *1 Sam. xx. 38. 39. And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.*

Secondly, With respect to the gracious soul's conversation

tion in a suffering time, the man's glorying in Christ with respect to the cross; our Lord has a weighty word, *Mark viii. 38. Whofoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* In opposition to this, we must glory in Christ even at such a time, if we would evidence ourselves true Christians.

1. The saints will keep on Christ's side, though it may be lowest; as better with the cross, than the world's side with the crown. There is never a soul engageth with Christ aright, but is reconciled to the cross of Christ; and in the day of its closing with him, lays down its all at his feet, taking them up again at his command, to hold them as his, and to use them for him, ay and till he call for them, *Luke xiv. 26.*: and so is content to run all hazards with him, and will not be boasted away from him; *For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave, Cant. viii. 6.* In a time of prosperity Christ gets such a backing as *Oideon* with his thirty-two thousand men, *Judg. vii.*: but whenever the storm arises, there goes off a large multitude; and when they are particularly brought down to the waters of suffering, there goes off another party, till few do remain. But they to whom the kingdom is appointed, will continue with him in the trial. But it seems self is such a salamander as can live in the fire, *1 Cor. xiii. 3.*; and that though men, by denying Christ to shift the cross, may prove themselves naught, yet even suffering for Christ will not prove one to be a saint: *2 Cor. xi. 13. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.* Compared with *vers. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool), I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.* Consider then,

2. The saints will carry in this matter meekly and humbly, however boldly, as knowing the snare, and their own weakness to resist; and not from a Roman courage, or natural stiffness and briskness of spirit, which being from proud self, will never make the man act humbly or suffer so. Hence is that exhortation, *1 Pet. iii. 13. Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.* They will glory in Christ, not only as he for whom, but also as he by whom they suffer. Often has it been observed, that the humble,

self-distrusting man, whose soul has trembled within him for fear of dishonouring the Lord, by his fainting in time of trial, has been the sound-hearted sufferer; while the brisk, fearless professor has made a sad account of himself, when it came to the point of suffering in earnest: *Jf. xl. 29. 30. 31. The Lord giveth power to the faint; and to them that have, no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.*

3. *Lastly*, Though the saints will glory in the cross of Christ before the world, yet they will glory more in himself even before them, but before God no glorying but in Christ. But it will readily be found, that if men do suffer for Christ that have no interest in him, they will glory more in his cross than himself; I mean, the cross they bear for his cause, not the sufferings of Christ, called *the cross of Christ*, Gal. vi. 14. It appears, that those seducers that disturbed the churches, gloried much in their sufferings for Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 23.: but in our text, the Apostle, to difference himself and other believers from them, says, *We are the circumcision, that—rejoice in Christ Jesus.* Thus far of the second character of a gracious soul, which I may sum up in the words of the Apostle, Rom. x. 9. 10. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* I shall straightway proceed to the

III. *Third and last character of a real saint, And have no confidence in the flesh.* This is an inference from the second character, and natively follows thereupon; for if our rejoicing be in Christ, it will not be in another. The fixing of the soul on him, is the removing of it from, and the rejecting of all other confidences. And therefore I shall endeavour briefly to dispatch it. I shall not trouble you with the various acceptations of this word *flesh* in the scripture. It is taken here for any created thing whatsoever, without Christ, that is to say, which is not in Christ, on which men confide in whole or in part, to commend them to God, whether they be external things or internal. Thus the saints

have

*have no confidence in the flesh; or they confide not, or have not confidence in the flesh, as others read it. The expressions are much the same; only it must be considered, that this character is given them, not in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the gospel, as may afterwards appear. "He who placeth his confidence for salvation," (they are the words of a judicious commentator on the place), "either in whole or in part, in any thing whatsoever, which is not Christ, or in Christ, certainly confides not in Christ, nor glories in him; and therefore is none of the circumcision, nor born of the Spirit." That this is the true sense of the words, appears from the opposition, in the text, betwixt rejoicing in Christ and confidence in the flesh; as also from the Apostle's own explication, vers. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.; where he shews what he meant by the *flesh*, not only external, but internal things, drawing off his confidences from all things without Christ, and centering the same on Christ alone. This is the character of a believer, but not as the former two, a positive mark of a saint; it is only a negative mark. The man that is not thus qualified is no saint: yet a man's being thus qualified, will not of itself prove him a saint; as is clear from the case of Judas, and all despairing persons, who have confidence in nothing, and so no confidence in the flesh. And so it is to be taken in conjunction with the former.*

Doct. He is the real Christian, who rejoicing in Christ Jesus, hath no confidence in any thing, that is not Christ, nor in Christ, in the matter of salvation.

There are two things which mens confidence in the matter of salvation doth respect; God's favour to them, and their duty to God. All know they cannot be happy without the favour of God, and that there is no attaining to salvation but in the way of duty, though most men cut their duty very short, and many bring it down to believing and repenting at the hour of death, they make it so scrimp. Accordingly we say, 1. The real Christian hath no confidence but in Christ in the point of justification, the pardon of his sin, and acceptance into favour with God. 2. He hath no confidence but in Christ for sanctification, and with respect to his duty. And both these the text, I think, aims at; and the matter of sanctification is not to be excluded, seeing the

Christian worships God in spirit, and rejoices in Christ Jesus. These two points I shall endeavour to clear.

I. The true Christian hath no confidence in any thing that is not Christ, nor in Christ, in point of justification. He dare not, he will not place his confidence, in whole or in part, in any other thing, to commend him to God and his favour. Christ is the only saviour he lippens to for his defence against wrath; only his blood is the saint's life, his righteousness his only covering. Hence says the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 7. 8. What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* The saint's best things are of no value with him in this matter; he accounts all his righteousnesses as filthy rags, *II. lxiv. 6.* He renounces all pleas before the Lord, but the plea of Christ's satisfaction; turns his back on all other refuges, and runs to the horns of the altar, and holds there. He owns guilt, acknowledges himself a just object of vengeance, but throws himself into the arms of a Mediator, and looks not for a smile from the throne but through the Redeemer's wounds, nor a pardon but what is written in the characters of Christ's blood without mixture. Happy is the man, that so doth; Christ himself says it, *Matth. v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit.* He is of the circumcision; for he rejoiceth in Christ, having had his confidence cut off from those things in which many place their confidence, to the ruin of their souls. It is not to be expected we can reckon up the false confidences that the heart out of Christ hath. Many a starting-hole will the soul have, till it be driven out of them all to Christ. The ignorant, the profane, the formalist, the natural man awakened, have their several confidences, whereby they hope to do well enough without Christ, or at least not to be obliged to him for all. I shall hint at some of these, whereby ye may judge of the rest accordingly. I have already shown, that the saints have no confidence in the mercy of God out of Christ; and yet that is the strong confidence of many. But there are two things besides, on which many build their confidence, to wit, external things, and internal things; some things without them, and some things within them.

First, The saints have no confidence in external things, and will be loath to lay their weight, in whole or in part, up-

on them; whether they be man's externals, or God's externals.

1. The saints have no confidence in man's externals. I call those things so, which God never made duty, but men make them so. These are not only vain confidences, but vain worship and service, that is loathsome to God, *Matth. xv. 9.* Men are apt to cut the law short enough, as it is found in the word; but mens nature has a wonderful itching after making additions of their own to it. Hence a cloud of superstition has darkened some churches, and the simplicity of gospel-worship is despised; mens inventions are brought in upon, yea, and instead of divine institutions: and when God has taken off the yoke of ceremonies instituted by himself, which the church was not able to bear, *Acts xv. 10.* men have devised out of their own hearts a yoke of ceremonies in the worship of God, to tempt God, and bind it on the neck of the churches. But though they should be bound on with the tie of antiquity, as *Matth. v. 21.* there is no prescription against the law of God, *Matth. xv. 2. 3.*; with the tie of church-authority, as *Matth. xxiii. 4.* the church *can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*, *2 Cor. xiii. 8.*; or with the tie of civil authority, as *Hos. v. 11.*; seeing it cannot be set home on the conscience with *Thus saith the Lord*, it is to be rejected, and by no means complied with, be the hazard what it will. For it is from Satan, and not from God: *2 Cor. xi. 2. 3.* *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* *Deut. iv. 2.* *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.* Hence also flows a croud of opinions and practices in the matters of God not found in the word, but contrary to it, which men zealously stick to as certain duties. Men greedily drink up these, and will be far more forward in them than commanded duties, because nature is always fond of its own brats. If men once take in these things, very readily will they have confidence in them, and highly value themselves upon them, *Judg. xvii. 12. 13.*; as is plain from the case of the Pharisees, and of others who herein tread in their steps: for it may be observed, that in every society, according as these

these things do rise, the very doctrine of free grace falls proportionably, and men will be found more zealous for a trifling ceremony, an unwarrantable opinion or practice, than for the vitals of Christianity. As all gospel truths and institutions have a tendency towards the life of faith, and center in Jesus Christ, *Eph. iv. 20. 21.*; so it will be found, that all unscriptural institutions, opinions, and practices, under whatever pretences of holiness they be advanced, have a tendency to weaken the life of faith, to carry men off from Christ, and are subservient to self, to high and towering imaginations against Christ, *Matth. xv. 4. 5. 6. Col. ii. 18. 19. 21.* There is no error in the head, but has some corruption in the heart, to which it is allied, and will strive to advance. But do others as they will, the saints will rejoice in Christ, and not make mens externals their confidence, *Philip. iii. 5. 7.* And no wonder; for,

2. The saints have no confidence even in God's externals; by which I understand those external things that are laid before us by God himself, which nevertheless have a mighty stress laid upon them by carnal men. And,

1st, They have no confidence in their external condition in the world. Whatever it be by the providence of God, they will not look on it as a thing that may commend them to God. Strange is the deceit of a carnal heart. If a man be poor and mean in the world, he thinks that is sufficient to secure him against eternal poverty; and concludes thence, that God will have him to suffer all his misery here, as if it could not consist with the justice of God, to make him miserable here and hereafter too. If he be rich and honourable, that swells him with conceit of himself, and his riches are his strong tower. As he is set before others in the world, he looks to come before others in another world on the same score. Let the word say to him what it will, he keeps his confidence, saying, *Hos. xii. 8. Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin.* And if a man meet with some signal favourable providences as to his outward condition, he looks on himself as the darling of heaven. But the saints will not place their confidence there: *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17.* They cannot so much as be evidences, far less confidences. Hence says the Preacher, *Eccl. ix. 1. 2. For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righte-*

ous, and the wife, and their works, are in the hand of God: no man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before them. All things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, &c. Ye may be poor and miserable here, and miserable through eternity, Job xv. 23. 24. Ye may fare deliciously every day, with the rich man, and yet in hell lift up your eyes, Luke xvi. And though like Saul seeking asses, ye found a kingdom, ye may be rejected of God as he was.

2dly, The saints have no confidence in their external privileges. The false apostles boasted much of their being Abraham's seed, of their circumcision, and the like. But, says the Apostle, *We have no confidence in the flesh.* He renounces all confidence in these things, vers. 5. 7. 2 Cor. v. 16. *Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh;* (says he): *yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.* We reckon no more on our being the children of Abraham, nay nor the brethren of Christ himself by nation. But where will the confidence of many be, if these be removed, that they are church-members, partakers of all church-privileges, and in society with Christ's party in the world? But raised it is in the saints, and raised it must be in others now, or it will be done, when there will be no occasion of getting another foundation of confidence laid: Luke xiii. 26. 27. *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.* And when the children of the kingdom are shut out, their case of all men will be most sad.

3dly, The saints have no confidence in their external attainments; as was the case with the Apostle, Philip. iii. 6. 7. *who, concerning zeal, persecuted the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless. But what things were gain to him, those he counted loss for Christ.* Great confidence have some in their negative holiness, Luke xviii. 11.; they can hold up their face to heaven, and say, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, &c.* They have lived honestly all their days, never wronged their neighbours; they are not profane, they are neither drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, unclean persons, &c. and have observed the commands of God better than many. And indeed they have been going to hell without letting the world hear the
found

sound of their feet. Or perhaps, though they have been profane, yet that was but in the folly of youth; but now they have taken up themselves, they are not what they were; and therefore doubt not of God's favour. Sirs, this is not the spot of God's people; they will as soon venture to sea in a bottomless boat, as venture their souls on this, that know ought of God or of his law. There are in hell this day, who have had all that to say that ye trust in; and if ye renounce it not, and get Christ in you the hope of glory, ye shall never see heaven: *Matth. v. 20. For except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

4thly, The saints have no confidence in their external duties; they have renounced their confidence, in whole and in part, in what they do or have done, *Philip. iii. 6. 7.* above-cited. *Vers. 8. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* By doing they never think to see heaven. There are two sorts of men opposite to the Christian in this.

(1.) There is a rude, ignorant generation, who do little at all in the way of external duties, and yet they say, they serve God as well as they can; or though they have no strength in themselves, they do as well as God will give them grace; yea, some will say, they do as well as God will give them leave. I speak what I know to be true. And here is their cursed confidence. All this is the filthy vomit of a proud and rebellious heart against God, by which they very plainly lay the blame on God that they do not better, like fallen *Adam*, *Gen. iii. 12.* But dare such say before a heart-searching God, that they have done all they could have done? Could ye not have holden in rash words that ye have spoken? could ye not have done something for eternity that ye did not? &c. But suppose, O man, thou hadst done all thou couldst, God's law is the rule of thy duty, and not thy strength; and if thou get not in to Christ, God's curse lies, and shall lie on thee through eternity, because thou continuedst not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, *Gal. iii. 10.* The devils have no strength to do good, nor will God give them grace; and yet their damnation is just: so will thine be. Thou hast grace in thine offer, which he is not obliged to give thee; but thou

art a despiser and rejecter of grace, *John v. 40.* Ye will not come to me, (says Christ), that ye might have life. Read your doom, *Matth. xxv. 24. 25.* Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine, *vers. 30.* Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(2.) There is another sort who do indeed go the round of external duties; they attend public ordinances, worship God in secret and in their families; and as men can quarrel nothing in their outward duties towards God, so they neglect not their external duties of righteousness and mercy toward others. They have the outward form of godliness. And these are but few; would God there were more of whom that could be said. But, alas! in the mean time they rest on these external things, *Luke xviii. 12. Is. lviii. 3.* They put them in Christ's room. But these things are so unfit to be confidences, that they cannot be evidences; for there is nothing in all the form of godliness beyond the reach of a hypocrite; and as they are mere external duties, they are an abomination to the Lord, *Is. i. 11. Ec. Mark x. 20. 21.* And will ye make them your confidence? Thy doing so demonstrates, that thou knowest neither the law of God, which cannot be satisfied but with inward, as well as outward obedience, nor the gospel of Christ, which overturns all these confidences before the Lord. Believe it, *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them, Jer. ii. 37.* Sure the saints dare have no confidence in them, nor will they venture before the Lord in these filthy rags, *Is. lxiv. 6.*

Lastly, The saints have no confidence in their external sufferings, though for Christ and his cause. Paul was a great sufferer, *2 Cor. xi. 23.* to the end; but yet he suffered the loss of all things for Christ, *Philip. iii. 8.*; and so suffered the loss of his sufferings in point of confidence, among the rest. There is a party, *Rev. vii. 14. 15.* whose garments had been rolled in their own blood for the cause of Christ; but durst they appear before the Lord in them? No; they washed them in the blood of the Lamb; and therefore are they before the throne; otherwise they had gone from the scaffold for Christ, into the pit of hell from the presence of the

Lord. And far less will they have confidence in their other sufferings, of what sort soever they be. Few can suffer for Christ; but there are yet fewer, who can both suffer, and not have confidence in their sufferings. O it is hard to lay out goods and gear, liberty and life, on the cause of Christ, and after all to think Christ is nothing at all in our debt; and that he may very justly bring others that have had a far cheaper religion, as far in as ourselves. The unhumbléd sufferer may read his heart in that murmuring complaint of the labourers, *Matth. xx. 12. These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.* But if mens confidence be not cut off from their sufferings, sad and dreadful will the doom be at length, *vers. 14. Take that thine is, (said the good man of the house), and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. vers. 16. So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.* If they be lippened to in whole or in part, what is given to them is robbed from the sufferings of Christ; and so will they prove a broken reed, that will not only fail, but pierce the hand and heart through with eternal sorrows. There is also a rude ignorant generation, who think if they suffer what is laid on them by common providence, all will be well with them in the world to come, for they suffer their misery here: and particularly women dying in child-birth are accounted happy on this very account, by a generation ignorant of God; for they say, these pains are, of all pains hereaway, likest the pains of hell. O brutish ignorance! O the perverseness of a hellish heart, to take the curse for a confidence in the matter of obtaining the blessing! The Apostle indeed, *1 Tim. ii. 15.* gives a comfort to godly women in the pains of child-birth, that they *shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith*; but says not, they shall be saved by it, or that they shall be saved whether they believe or not. Let men or womens hell be as hot as it will in the world, if they renounce not all confidence in their sufferings, and betake themselves to the sufferings of Christ alienarly, they shall assuredly, when they die, go out of one hell into another.

Secondly, The saints have no confidence for the favour of God in internals, in any thing within them. I have no exception to make here but one; and that is, *Christ in you, the hope of glory, Col. i. 27.* There are precious things in the saints, that make them *all glorious within*; but nothing but

Christ

Christ that can be confidences for God's favour; though some of them may indeed be evidences.

1. The saints have no confidence in their internal dispositions. The dispositions of their hearts are none of their confidences before the Lord; for *he that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool*, Prov. xxviii. 26. Many have a deal of confidence in those good hearts they have towards God, as they speak. They see not the naughtiness of their hearts, and the enmity against God that lurks there. Satan has them so blinded with self-love, that they cannot believe an ill tale of their hearts. This is not the spot of God's people. There is little goodness of heart in the world; but the best heart is always worst looked upon, *Matth. xxvi. 22. 25. 1 Tim. i. 15.*; and no wonder, for they believe God's testimony of it, *Jer. xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* Again, men wish they were better, and hope they may be better, and find a disposition in their spirits to do much and suffer much for Christ, and a great aversion to many ill things they see in the world. And indeed people may draw evidences of their state from the dispositions of their hearts; but they had need to examine them well, seeing all these may be in hypocrites, *Prov. xiii. 4. Hof. vi. 4. 2 Kings x. 16. Luke xviii. 11.* But at best they can be no confidences, seeing there is always such a mixture of evil dispositions with them, as might ruin men.

2. The saints have no confidence in their internal exercises upon their spirits. Hypocrites may have their exercises about their soul's matters. They may be troubled about their soul's state, as we see in *Simon*, Acts viii. and *Felix*, Acts xxiv. They may have great inward struggles betwixt corruption and an enlightened conscience, upon a temptation laid in their way; as in the case of *Herod*, about beheading of *John*; and of *Pilate*, about the condemning Christ; yea so as the temptation may be resisted in the end, as in *Balaam's* case. What restlessness of spirit, self-indignation, was in *Judas's* case? What strong resolutions did terrors on *Saul* and *Pharaoh* produce in them? The saints have more kindly exercises. But one difference amongst many betwixt the two, is, that the exercises of the godly issue still in driving them further out of themselves, *Matth. v. 3.* and consequently out of any confidence in their exercises; while the other are either by theirs driven out of all hope, as *Judas*, or driven more into themselves, as those, *Rom. x.*

3. who being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

3. The saints have no confidence in their internal attainments. Hypocrites may have vast attainments, great gifts, enlargements in the exercise of these gifts by a common operation of the Spirit. They may attain to raptures of joy in holy duties, yea, and taste of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come. Read these scriptures, *1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. Matth. xiii. 20 21. Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6.* But although these cannot be evidences, they make them confidences, and ruin themselves thereby, *Matth. vii. 22. 23.* So many build their confidence on the like of these things; and whereas they should lead them to Christ, they are carried the farther from Christ by them. But miserable comforters will they find them all at length. The saints have far higher attainments than these. The least measure of saving knowledge, communion with God in Christ, the least groan from a heart touched with gospel-grace, *Rom. viii. 26.* is better than all those bulky attainments of the hypocrite. Yet because they are not Christ, nor in Christ, but in themselves, though from Christ, they will not, they dare not make them their confidences for the Lord's favour. They know God to be holy, themselves impure vessels, into which nothing can be poured, be it never so good, but it will be tainted with impurity. And therefore *Paul*, who was caught up into the third heavens, yet abhors to glory in any thing but the sufferings of Christ, *Gal. vi. 14. Philip. iii. 8.*

4. *Lastly*, The saints have no confidence in their graces, their inherent graces. Grace is precious, and makes the soul in some measure like God. Happy is the man that has it. Every believer has the image of God on him, *grace for grace* that is in Christ, as the wax has on it the print of the seal. But this I confidently say, it is the grace of God in Christ, not the grace of God in the saints, that they confide in before the Lord. However precious inherent grace is, it is not Christ; it is but a created quality in a sinner. Let it be screwed to its highest pitch that it comes to in any saint on earth, it cannot answer the demands of the law, being mixed with corruption; and being lippened unto that way, would prove but an arm of flesh. It is *gold* indeed, but not such as will abide the fiery trial of the law's furnace: it is *white raiment* indeed; but it is not pure, but stained white, which is no fit garment for a criminal to stand

stand in for favour at the court of heaven: and therefore Christ offers sinners *tried gold*, unstained white raiment, of his own sufferings and righteousness, *Rev. iii. 18.* And so the saints renounce all without them and within them for it. Hence says the Apostle, *Philip. iii. 8, 9.* *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*

I shall instance in these two, which are in effigie most abused by carnal men, and set up against Christ.

1st, The grace of repentance. There is an ignorant generation, ask them, how they think to be saved? they will tell you, they repent of their sins day and night. This they will say whom their soul's hazard never kept from an hour's sleep all their days. The matter is, they rue many things they do; and no wonder, for they cannot be fond of destruction. And thus they know not what sin is, nor what repentance is indeed. O what needed Christ to have come, and groined and died on a cross under the weight of wrath, if people may be saved this way? Lippen to this as ye will, ye will repent in hell that ever ye should have made it either evidence or confidence. But there are some who spin a more fine thread of soul-deception of themselves, as the word is, *Gal. vi. 3.* They have in very deed legal qualms of conscience, and their guilt cuts them to the heart; and they go to God, and confess their sin, are resolved to forsake, and never do the like again; and so build their confidence here, especially if they get tears for it; and they think they can give scripture for this confidence of theirs, as *Prov. xxviii. 13.* *Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy;* and *Matth. v. 4.* *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* Sirs, hypocrites may do all this; Judas repented as bitterly as ever ye did, *Pharath* and *Saul* confessed and had their resolutions to forsake, and *Esau* his tears. But what law or what gospel allows you to make this your confidence? Will your confession, prayers, tears, forsaking of sin, (which yet indeed ye do not from the heart), answer the demands of the law? Will these shield you from the strokes of justice? Remember it is *shedding of blood*, not pouring out of water, much less pouring out of words, that can purchase remission. Many times where

where water goes out, wind enters in, and makes the tears so abominable as they cannot come into the Lord's bottle. Cursed be those tears that blind the soul so as it cannot see the absolute necessity of the blood of Christ, that are not brought to the fountain of Christ's blood, and washed there, lest they make the soul abominable in the sight of a holy God. If you think the gospel gives you ground, sure it is not the gospel of Christ does it; for Christ's gospel establishes the law, which ye do thus overturn, *Rom. iii. 31. and x. 4.* The truth is, in this way ye reject both the true law and gospel, and treat with God in the way of a bastard-covenant of works of your own making, which God will never agree to; nor does he agree to it by those promises made to them that confess, and them that mourn. Consider, they must either be promises of the covenant of works, or of the covenant of grace. Promises of the covenant of works they are not; for that is express, *Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* If they be promises of the covenant of grace, how come ye to plead them without first laying hold by faith on him in whom they are all yea and amen? Now, this ye cannot do, according to the text, unless ye have no confidence in any thing that is not Christ, or in Christ. Do ye think that the Spirit of God makes there a promise of mercy from an unatoned God, or directs to a confession not put in the hand of the *Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous*, *1 John ii. 1.*? No; *God heareth not sinners, but he heareth him always*; and those petitions that are presented by him, he grants them to sinners for his sake. And that promise, *Matth. v. 4. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted*, is it to all mourners, think ye? is it to *Esau's* tears, and *Judas's* groans? It is to gospel-mourners: and therefore that men might have no ground to mistake these blessings, our Lord fixeth that point first, and sets it in the front of the blessings, to be carried through all the rest, *vers. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit.* And such are all true penitents; and therefore will never make their repenting and mourning their confidence before the Lord. They are dissatisfied with all they do, because they can do nothing as they ought, *Jf. lxiv. 6.*; and, upon a review of their repentance, they see such defects in it, as needs a cover of blood; their tears clear their eyes to see the necessity of the Mediator's blood the better: therefore says *David*, in his bitter repentings, *Psal. li. 7. Purge me with*

with hyssop; that is, with the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blood of the Redeemer, typified by the blood of the sacrifices sprinkled with hyssop on the people, *Heb. ix. 19. 20.* and by the blood of a bird sprinkled with hyssop on the leper, when he was to be cleansed, and restored to society, *Lev. xiv. 6. 7.* *Wash me*, to wit, as a fuller washeth cloth to make it pure white. It seems he thought his own plunging himself in his tears could not whiten the stained soul. Nay, the true penitent is free grace's debtor for all, and will acknowledge it is free grace that he is not shut out from the presence of God and his mercy, after he has bathed himself in his tears, *Psal. li. 11.* *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.* Here he acknowledgeth, he might justly get Cain and Saul's measure. *Cast me not away from thy presence*, as thou didst Cain the first murderer; *Take not thy holy spirit from me*, as thou took thy Spirit from Saul the first king of Israel upon his disobedience, *1 Sam. xvi. 14.* Compare *2 Sam. vii. 15.*

2dly, The grace of faith. There is an ignorant generation that say they believe in God or in Christ; but their faith cannot be called *knowledge*, as *Is. liii. 11.* for they are full of darkness in their minds, they know not what faith is, nor how they came by it; their faith grew up with them, (for they think they believed all their days), and it will die with them. They have a strong confidence of mercy; which is but gross presumption, seeing it neither purifies heart nor life, *Acts xv. 9.* *1 John iii. 3.*; and therefore *shall be rooted out of their tabernacle, and it shall bring them to the king of terrors*, *Job xviii. 14.* And there are others who came not so easily by the faith they have; yet is it not *faith unfeigned*, *1 Tim. i. 5.* but they make it their confidence. There are many things that men call faith, among ignorant and knowing folk too, who are yet in the state of nature. The revelation of the absolute necessity of faith to salvation is so clear, that hardly can a person be a hearer of the gospel, and not know it; and every man naturally has a principle of self-preservation: hence upon the hearing of this, and especially upon awakenings of conscience, nature will make some efforts for believing. But faith being produced only by the *working of God's mighty power*, *Eph. i. 19.* and not by the power of nature, the result of all nature's efforts this way, is but some mis-shapen brat instead of faith. Hence we read of *Simon's believing*, *Acts viii. 13.*; and *many believing in his name*, whom yet Christ knew to be naught, *John ii. 23.*

24. 25. ; and some *staying themselves upon the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness*, II. xlviii. 1. 2. I am not here to enter on the several sorts of feigned faith : but with relation to our purpose, there is one thing to be noticed concerning them all, and that is, they never carry a man out of himself to Jesus Christ for all, as true faith doth. That mis-shapen faith is not the soul's going out of itself to Christ to live in and by him ; but is the soul's going of itself and with self to Christ, as a servant to a master. For nature cannot act but in the way of the first covenant : and to a natural man, in his practical judgment, the gospel-way of salvation differs not in kind from the way of *Adam's* covenant, but only in the measure and degree of obedience ; for to them it is still, *Do this, and live ; Do this, not do perfect obedience* indeed, they know they cannot reach that ; but repent, believe, reform, *Do this*. Now, the natural man accordingly does this ; and so the work of faith (for I must call it so) is to him the fulfilling of the condition of this new covenant, and turns his confidence before the Lord for his favour, as *Adam's* perfect obedience to the law would have been his confidence. This was the confidence of *Israel* when they had *cast off the thing that was good*, Hos. viii. 2. *Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee ;* and of the foolish virgins, *Matth. xxv. 11. Lord, Lord, (they plead a covenant-interest in him, Matth. vii. 21.), open to us, us virgins.* Thus may ye see how their faith is their folly, as being put in the room of Christ ; and so they have but rags for righteousness. But the saints have a faith of the operation of God ; yet do they not rest in it, but by it rest and confide on Jesus Christ. It carries the saint out of himself, even his gracious self, *Philip. iii. 8. True faith is not a burden-bearer, but an onlayer of burdens, Psal. lv. 22. It is not a leaning-stock, but an act of leaning, Cant. viii. 5. It purifies indeed, Acts xv. 9. but no other way but as it lays open the soul to Christ, that a stream of blood may run through it. The hyssop and scarlet wool were no doubt a blithe sight to the people, and particularly to the poor lepers under the law : but had the dry hyssop and wool been shaken never so oft over them, what would they have availed ? but they are dipt in the blood, and the people sprinkled with that blood from off the hyssop and scarlet wool. And when the blood fell, the people were ceremonially purged, and the leper cleansed. And so is it in the case of believing. Thus ye see the saints have no confidence*

in point of justification, or for obtaining of God's favour, in any thing that is not Christ, or in Christ.

II. The saints have no confidence in point of sanctification, or with respect to duty, in any thing that is not Christ, nor in Christ. As they have taken him alone for justification, so they take him alone for sanctification; for he is *made unto us sanctification*, as well as *righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. The Father has constituted him the head of influences for duty; and from that head it is that *all the body having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God*, Col. ii. 19. And this is that life of faith for sanctification that the saints live: *John vi. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* There are here also many things men make their confidencees, which I cannot particularly name; but, in the general, there are seven things I shall touch at, which are but arms of flesh when lipped to, in the matter of sanctification.

1. The saints have no confidence in their stock of natural and acquired abilities, gifts or parts, in the point of sanctification, or performance of duties. Hence says the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves.* This is the stock which is the confidence of many in their religious duties; and upon it they can venture on duty undaunted, their work being rather to be filled with the thoughts of their own strength, and what their abilities may reach, than to be emptied of themselves; to muster up their own forces, than to be looking to the Lord for strength from above, and overlooking themselves. Thus a gift of knowledge, utterance, a good natural temper or disposition, and such like, are by natural men put in Christ's room; and on these they confide for performing of duties, and bearing out against temptations. And upon this foundation have stately buildings of morality been reared up, and very glorious forms of godliness, which beholders have blessed, while God, that seeth the heart, has cursed them: *Jer. xvii. 5. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.* But this is not the way of the saints: *Psal. xlv. 5. 6. Through thee will we push down*

our enemies, (says the Psalmist); *through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.* *Ih. xl. 29.* 30. natural men are represented as youths full of natural vigour, strength, and activity, who will do their work by themselves, and wait not upon the Lord. But the godly are distinguished from them as men who see their strength failed, and not to be lippeden to; and hence look without themselves for it, and roll their way on the Lord, as finding their own shoulders unable for the burden.

2. The saints have no confidence in the means of sanctification, as the word, sacraments, prayer, afflictions, and the like; knowing that *it is the spirit that quickeneth*, *John vi. 63.* and that they are only means through which influences are conveyed from Christ to the souls of his people. None look with such an affectionate eye on the ordinances as they, but none look so far above them either, *Psal. xxvii. 4.*; for the natural man either tramples on them, or idolizeth them, being satisfied with the chair of state though empty. Many are ruined with their confidence this way: they rest in the work done, as if that would heal their sores; they place that confidence in means and instruments, which they should place in Christ himself: and hence they go from one mean to another, and still are *like the heath in the wilderness, that seeth not when good cometh, and that inhabiteth the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited*, *Jer. xvii. 6.* There is a voice they hear within them, stirring them up to holiness of life; but upon the hearing of it, they do as young Samuel, who, when the Lord called him, went to *Eli*: so they go to this and the other mean of sanctification, but never look beyond them to the fountain of sanctification in the Mediator; or as the woman labouring under the issue of blood, spent all her means on the physicians ere she came to Christ.

3. The saints have no confidence in their purposes and resolutions for holiness. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. cxvi. 9. 10. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken.* He had resolved, but his confidence was in the Lord, in whom he had believed. Compare what the Apostle says, *2 Tim. i. 12. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* O how venturous is nature, being once fleshed with vigorous purposes and resolves! but when the temptation comes, they

they fall down like the walls of *Jericho* at the sounding of rams horns, *Prov. vii. 21. 22. Matth. viii. 19. 20.* Their bent bow in which they trusted, quickly misgives; the fire-edge soon wears off the spirit that is not staid on the Lord. How many purposes and strong resolutions come to nought, because in taking them up men look not to the Lord as the fountain of strength, but to themselves; and when they are made, there is more weight laid on them than they can bear? Hence the root being rottenness, the blossom flies up as dust; as was the case with the young man void of understanding, who when an whore *with her much fair speech caused him to yield, and with the flattering of her lips forced him, went after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, Prov. vii. 21. 22.*

4. The saints have no confidence in their vows and engagements to holiness, or any particular duty; knowing that these are too weak bands for a masterful ill heart, which nothing but the power of the Spirit of Christ can hedge in. Every saint is devoted to the Lord with his own deliberate consent, having given away himself wholly to Christ, to be disposed of as he will, *2 Cor. viii. 5.*; and will look on his soul and body as consecrated things, and no more his own but the Lord's, to do and suffer for him, according to his will. But while the saints take on these solemn bands, and come under these awful and sacred engagements to duty, their confidence is not in the bands, but in him to whom they are bound, and to whom they bind themselves as to the fountain of strength: *Is. xlv. 23. 24. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* But, alas! the vows of many are in effect a vowing themselves away from Christ. Nature awakened is very fruitful in vows. Sometimes the man will bind a yoke on himself that the word never bound on him, and insnare himself with a vow to abstain from such and such a thing altogether, when his conscience gets up on him for his running to some monstrous excess in it. Or if it be a duty he has wofully slighted, he will come under a vow, not only to set about it, but so often, and at such and such times particularly, which yet is not determined by the word. And when he has been carried off into courses absolutely condemned by the word, and in which his natural

conscience will give him no rest, there shall be a violent sally of the soul against them, ending in a solemn promise and vow to the Lord, never to do so any more, without any eye to the corruption of nature, which might make him wary of his words before the Lord, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, without whom we can do nothing, and from whom all our strength must come. And thus the poor blinded soul thinks it is fenced, and in this mud-wall of vows is its confidence. But what is the end of it? The man is even like one that has a brook running through his ground, which often spoils it with its outbreakings, and he builds a wall to stop it; but is not so wise as to fill up the spring, or turn the stream another way, where it could not do such harm: and so within a little time the water gathers, and forcibly breaks down the wall, running out with more violence than ever. And so the vows go like *Samson's* green withs, when he heard the *Philistines* were upon him.

5. The saints have no confidence in their own endeavours after holiness. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. cxxxvii. 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* It is the property of a saint, to work as diligently as if he had none to help, but to overlook his work as if he had not put hand to it at all: *1 Cor. xv. 10. I laboured more abundantly than they all, (says the Apostle): yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* O, there is much to be done for the advancing of holiness; but none have so much confidence in what is done for that end, as those that do least that way. A man may do very much to win over some lusts, and to attain to such a sort of life as his conscience tells him is necessary for him if he would see heaven, and yet be naught, as working from himself, and resting in himself. *Herod* did many things. It is a difficult thing indeed, for a man to be pursuing a good life, and to win over troublesome lusts, and in pursuit thereof to pray often, and vigorously too, yea, to fast and pray for the casting out of some devils, to struggle against them, watch against them, and to keep at a distance from the occasions of temptation, and such like: but it is far more difficult to be denied to all these when they are done, and to have no confidence in them, but for all to trust in him that raiseth the dead. Men under the law's tutory may do the former; for *skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give*

give for his life : but grace is necessary to the latter, as that which can only carry a man out of himself to Christ.

6. The saints have no confidence in the good frame and disposition of their hearts ; that is to say, in actual grace. A good frame is a most desirable thing, and makes a great facility in the way of God while it lasts. It is a precious ointment that refreshes the traveller ; but it is no good staff to lean on, it will not bear the weight of one duty : it is a lamp that will quickly go out, if it be not fed with fresh oil from the fountain of grace, the Lord Jesus. Remarkable is that petition of *David* for the people when they were in an excellent frame, *1 Chron. xxix. 17, 18.* *As for me,* (says he), *in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things : and now have I seen with joy thy people which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.* He saw it was not to be made a confidence, and therefore lays the weight of all, and even of preserving that frame, upon the Lord himself. But many, though their frame is no actual grace, but the product of some common operations on their spirits, make them their confidence, and in the strength thereof go out to their duties : but assuredly they shall not see when good cometh, who thus put their frame in the room of Christ ; and oftentimes for that cause, in the just judgment of God, it fails them, ere they win through with the duty, that they may see it is not Christ, but a broken reed.

7. Lastly, The saints have no confidence in habitual grace. *Paul* had a great stock of it, but he durst not venture to live on it, *Gal. ii. 20.* *I am crucified with Christ,* (says he) : *Nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* As I said in the point of justification, so in the point of sanctification, it is not the grace of God within them which they confide in, but the grace without them, in *Jesus Christ*. The grace within the saints is a well whose springs are oft stopped, and whose streams are oft very dry ; but the grace without them, in *Christ*, is an ever-flowing fountain, to which they can never come wrong. Where were the life and fruit of the branch, if it were left to the sap within itself, which would quickly evaporate and the branch wither ? but it is
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the sap in the stock that keeps the branch living ; and so it is the grace in Christ that keeps the believer living, *John vi. 57.* But, alas ! there are not a few who have neither repentance, love, faith, nor other graces in truth, but the shadows of them, who yet make what they have, their confidence in point of sanctification ; who, when they would make the fashion of believing, mourning, &c. look in to themselves for it, but look not up to Christ ; whereas the path-way of the saints, is to mount up with wings as eagles, and then fall down on the prey. Thus ye see the saints have no confidence in the flesh, either in point of justification or sanctification ; no confidence in any thing without them or within them, that is not Christ or in Christ. And whatever it is I have named, or that I have not named, which men make their confidence before the Lord either of these ways, to set it in the room of Christ, or to set it beside him, so far as it is made a confidence, be it devoted to a curse, and as such for ever exterminated and rooted out : *Jer. xvii. 5. 6. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.*

Quest. Is it so that every saint is altogether free of those false confidences, and no ways tainted in that sort ? *Ans.* I told you when entering on this clause, that this is not understood of the saints as if they were pure from it in the eye of the law, but in the eye of the gospel. There is a great and weighty truth supposed as the foundation of this description of the true Christian, and that is, That corrupt nature is quite opposite to Christ, and to the contrivance of salvation by him. It may be I may afterwards touch on it *. The way of the covenant of works is natural to men. Now, seeing that the best are but in part renewed, it is evident that there are in the greatest saints remains of a legal temper, and that nature now and then has in them its flings against the gospel-way, and towards cursed self, both in the point of obtaining God's favour, as in the case of *Peter, Matth. xix. 27.* who said unto Jesus, *Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore ?*

* See Human nature in its fourfold state, state 2. head 1. concerning the corruption of the will.

and in the point of duty, as in the case of *James and John* the sons of *Zebedee*, *Matth. xx. 22.* who, after Jesus had put the question to them, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* said unto him, *We are able.* But,

1. Every saint in his closing with Christ has been carried freely out of himself to Christ, though self has not yet been carried fully out of him: *Psal. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing [willingnesses] in the day of thy power.* They shall pour out their hearts to him like water that comes freely away, though the vessel is not presently dry, but something of the water still cleaves to it for a time. Where the soul comes to Christ, there is a digging deep in that soul, that looses the confidence in the flesh at the root; so that the saint's heart is loosed from it, and, devoting it to a curse, lays itself naked and bare at Christ's feet, without any thing to commend it to him, but for all ventures into the arms of free grace. But the hypocrite never comes freely out of himself to Christ: his closing with Christ is but a forced put at best; as *Adonijah* ran to the horns of the altar when in hazard of his life, who, it is like, cared very little for it otherwise; and as the *Israelites*, *Psal. lxxviii. 34. 36. 37. When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.* Nor does the hypocrite ever come to the market of free grace without money in his hand; the proud heart has still something in itself whereupon to challenge welcome.

2. Every saint habitually walks in the way of renouncing all confidence in the flesh; the habitual bent and set of their souls lies out of themselves to Christ, though, through the prevailing of corruption, they want not often the risings of self in them. And God reckons of his people according to what they habitually are, and not according to what starting aside their corruption does occasion. So they are said to *live by him*, *John vi. 57.*; though they are sometimes set down at another table, where, by their feeding on wind, some false flesh grows on them, which grace makes afterward to fall; as in *Peter's* case, *Matth. xxvi. 33.* compared with *vers. 75.*: and they return with that in their mouths, *Jer. iii. 22. 23. Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills,*

hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. But the hypocrites habitual confidence is in the flesh, seeing they were never spiritually circumcised, nor their hearts truly cut off from it.

3. The saints have their struggles against this selfish disposition, as against other members of the old man. Self-denial is the lesson Christ puts first in the hands of his people, and it serves them to be learning it all their days. The saints have a double work with their hearts about duties; first, to get them up to them; secondly, to hold them down in them, that they get not up in point of confidence in them. Many see not this disposition in their hearts, and therefore it is not their work to mortify it: but though the tares may be sown and grow while men sleep, they are not plucked up but when men are awake, and their hand at work. If there were hurtful weeds growing in a garden, and the gardener knew nothing of plucking them up, it would be a shrewd sign they were there still.

4. *Lastly*, When the godly do their duties best, they are farthest from confidence in the flesh: with others it is not so. Nature builds always up nature; but the more grace and nearness to God, the more vile is the saint in his own eyes, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 14. And it is confirmed by the experience of the saints, that when they have had greatest help in duties, they have afterwards been watched, and so treated by providence, that in that case they have got such ballast, as has made them more than ever see the necessity of the blood and Spirit of Christ; as in the Apostle's case, 2 *Cor.* xii. 7.

Use. I exhort you from this to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to have no confidence in the flesh. What is already said, may serve for evidences to convince you of this cursed confidence. And therefore I shall insist no further upon it at present.

Thus I have gone through these characters of a person in the state of grace; and have insisted the longer on them, that I might discover to you your state before the Lord. Let me now in a few words sum up the evidence of the text. A saint is one that works as if he were to win heaven by his working. He worships and serves God, and that in spirit, his heart is at the work; yet overlooks all his works before the Lord, as if he had done nothing at all. *He rejoiceth in Christ Jesus, and hath no confidence in the flesh.* His confidence is cut off from all that is not Christ,

or in Christ, in point of justification; therefore he *rejoiceth in Christ* alone: and in point of sanctification; therefore he *worships in the Spirit*, looking to Christ for his Spirit to carry him through duties. He sees the miserable defects of his worship and service; these send him to Christ, and raise his estimation of imputed righteousness: he finds Christ the stay of his soul; and this sends him back to duty strengthened. Christ is his life, duty is his work; but he dies in point of confidence to his duties, that he may live to Christ. He is neither a workless believer, nor a faithless worker, but a working believer.

And now, Sirs, to conclude, I beseech you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye will consider what I have said, and impartially try your state by it. It was with fear and trembling I, entered upon, and went through these words, because of the exceeding weightiness of the matter, as determining the state of souls before the Lord; and therefore I did not chuse to heap up many particulars, but to speak largely to a few, that the evidences might be plain, useful, searching, and safe. For I reckon, that as giving of marks of true saints is one of the most difficult parts of preaching, so marks overly proposed, and not followed out, are to the most part of hearers either useless or hurtful. I hope they have been confirming to some; I wish they might reach their design in others, yet strangers to Christ. Let it be acknowledged to the praise of the good hand of God, that falling to be delivered in the winter, (in which I have something to remark for myself with thankfulness), the season has been so very good, that ye have not been hindered, by the badness of the weather, from attending, as usually in that time of the year; though, alas for it! summer and winter are much alike, in that respect, to several careless perishing souls among you. Sirs, according to the state of your souls now, so will it be with you through eternity. Examine yourselves therefore now, whether Christ be in you or not; whether ye be yet in the black state of nature, uncircumcised spiritually; or whether ye be in the state of grace, and of the true circumcision. Ye have heard the characters, let conscience make the application; and judge yourselves, that ye be not judged and condemned with the world. See now on what ground ye stand; for as ye stand in the world, so shall ye stand before the tribunal of God. Deceive not yourselves: Religion is a mystery to most of the hearers of the gospel; and as some have no shadow of

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it, many embrace the shadow of it instead of the substance, and please themselves with those things that will not abide trial by the word here, and will evanish as a dream when they are sifted before the tribunal of Christ. If your state be found right upon an impartial trial, it will be an unspeakable comfort : if it be found wrong, it is not the trial that makes it so, it only discovers it to be what it is ; and there is yet time to get wrongs righted, and to lay a new foundation, which may last for the eternal welfare of your souls. Consider what I have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

The

The CHRISTIAN WARFARE;

OR,

The good FIGHT of FAITH.

Several Sermons, preached at *Ettrick*, in the
Year 1723.

I TIM. VI. 12.

Fight the good fight of faith.

THE Apostle having given *Timothy* an exhortation to several particular duties, here gives him an exhortation to the Christian life in general. Wherein we have two things.

1. A description of the Christian life. It is not an easy, idle, inactive life; but, (1.) A *fight*, a combat, a wrestling: for there are many enemies set to keep us out of the promised land. (2.) A *good* fight. There are many ill fights in the world. The men of the world have many fights and squabbles about this world, the honours, advantages, and pleasures of it, not worth the fighting for. But it is a good fight, a noble and worthy fight, wherein true valour and magnanimity appears. (3.) A fight of *faith*. Some understand this of the doctrine of faith, as that which is to be fought for. I understand it rather of the grace of faith, by which the fight is to be managed. This comprehends the former; and is more agreeable to the practical directions, vers. 11. and the *laying hold on eternal life*, which is done by the grace of faith. So it is a fight to be managed in the way of believing.

2. The word of command given: *Fight the good fight of faith*: "Agonize, like a combatant, wrestler, putting forth
"your utmost vigour." *Timothy* was engaged already in the

fight ; but still he was in the field of battle, and the enemy not yet off the field : therefore it is said to him, *Fight*. Paul was going off the field, and he says, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,* 2 Tim. iv. 7. Timothy was come on the field, and to him it is said, *Fight*.

The doctrine natively arising from the words, is this.

DOCT. *The Christian life is the good fight of faith, that must be fought by all that would see heaven.*

In discoursing this doctrine, we shall shew,

- I. In what respects the Christian life is the fight of faith.
- II. In what respects it is a good fight.
- III. Why the Christian life, in the disposal of holy providence, is made a fight.
- IV. Why a fight of faith.
- V. Touch at some particular fights of faith the Christian may have in his course heavenward.

I. We shall shew *in what respects the Christian life is the fight of faith*. I take up this in these seven things.

1. There are enemies of our salvation, and there must be faith in the soul to set against them. Where there are not two parties, there can be no fight. There is no fighting in heaven, for there are no enemies there, *Rev. xxi. 25*. There is none of this fighting in the unbelieving world neither ; for the enemies have all there alone, and there is no faith to set against them, *Luke xi. 21*. Unbelief carries the man quite over to the enemy's side ; it is the evil spy, that says, It is needless to think on the fight. This fight is only found where faith and its opposites meet ; and that is in the Christian's heart and life : *Cant. vi. ult. What will ye see in the Shulamite ? as it were the company of two armies*. So the combatant is only the man that has given up his name to Christ, and listed with him.

2. The enemy will not be at quiet ; he will make an attack on the believer setting heavenward. Hence is that exhortation, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant ; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour*. Satan may rock his own children, and labour to keep all quiet : the more secure they lie, they are in the less hazard to break away from him. But God's children must not look for such treatment ; their faces are away-

away-ward from his kingdom ; and therefore the enemy's face will be set against them, as a prize.

3. God's people must resist : 1 Pet. v. 9. *Whom (Satan) resist steadfast in the faith.* They must set themselves to stand their ground against all opposition, and grapple with the difficulties in their way to heaven, Luke xiii. 24. They must be denied to their ease, content to quit their soft beds of ease, and take the field for it, and endure hardness, 2 Tim.

ii. 3.

4. They must resist by faith, 1 Pet. v. 9. above-cited. Faith is the mouth of the soul, that must give the shout in this battle, the hands the men of might must find in it, the weapon they must wield in it, both in the offensive and defensive part of it : Eph. vi. 16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* So one must not only have the grace of faith, but he must have it in exercise.

5. They must continue in that resistance, and hold on in it : Eph. vi. 13. *Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.* The Christian life is a fight, and that denotes a continuance. Many think they should have no more ado, but whenever an enemy starts up, to lay at him with a stroke, and strike him down ; and so be easy again : and so they perplex themselves with doubts, fears, and jealousies of the love of God, because it is otherwise with them, the enemy being still fresh and vigorous, Is. xxvi. 18. But alas ! Sirs, ye should consider, that that may be striking indeed, but not a fight, being of no continuance.

6. They must lay their account with ups and downs, getting as well as giving wounds in the encounter. Hence says David, Psal. xxx. 7. *Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong : thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* Prevailing Jacob halted in his thigh, after his struggle of faith with the angel. To be absolute masters over the enemy, would not be the fight of faith, but the triumph of faith, which is reserved for heaven. In the fight of faith, the Christian may be set to his knees, but must not give over : yea, though the enemy should lay him on his back, he must say, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy : when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me,* Mic. 7. 8. and so bend to his feet again.

7. Lastly, Faith has the chief interest in this fight. In it there

there will be use for all the graces, the doing and suffering graces : yet the fight has its name from faith, as that which has the chief hand in it. For,

1st, It is faith's possession that the plea is about. Life and salvation in Christ Jesus is held forth, offered, and exhibited in the gospel to the sinner ; and the sinner believing in Christ, appropriates and takes possession of it by faith : *Cant. ii. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.* John xx. 28. *Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God,* 1 John v. 11. 12. *This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life : and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* There is the ground of the quarrel the enemy has. If the man will quit his plea for life and salvation by Christ, the fight is at an end ; the enemy has his design. But if not, the alarm is sounded, and the fight begins to force him from it.

2^{dly}, It is faith that holds fast the possession which the enemy would force from the man. For it is the bond of union betwixt Christ and the soul, and it is that which is the hold of Christ and eternal life : *Heb. x. 35. 38. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. Now the just shall live by faith.* Therefore, believing, we are said to *cleave to the Lord, to hold fast what we have, &c.* The securities and rights to the heavenly inheritance are the promises ; faith gripes them, and so keeps possession.

3^{dly}, It is faith that, of all the graces, is the main actor in this fight. Those worthies in *Heb. xi.* exercised and had need of all the graces of the Spirit. There was much love, humility, meekness, patience, &c. in their doing and suffering so great things : but all is ascribed to faith. For faith is the captain of all the graces ; it leads them out, puts an edge upon them for the fight, and makes them active. And therefore, in this fight, the word that is given from heaven, is, *Be not afraid, only believe,* Mark v. 36. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,* Eph. vi. 16.

Quest. How comes it that faith has the preference among all the rest of the graces in this fight ? *Ans.* On these accounts.

(1.) It is the grace that is first on the field of battle, and all the rest follow it. It is the first link of the chain of the graces of the Spirit, that draws all the rest after it, 1 *Tim.*

i. 5. It is the mother-grace, out of whose womb they all come forth ; because it is the uniting grace that knits the soul to Christ, the fountain of fulness. So the way to get love, repentance, patience, &c. is to believe. Thus it furnishes the field of battle, with fighters on Christ's side.

(2.) It strengthens them all, according to its measure ; for that is the rule of the dispensation of grace, *According to thy faith, be it unto thee.* According as it is weak or strong, so are they : for it is not only the mother-grace, but the nursing grace. Faith lies as it were nearest the fountain, and is the channel of conveyance of supply : so as it gets in, they get out for their nourishment.

(3.) It brings the healing they get to their wounds. Many a time the Christian's love is foundered in this fight, and is like to bleed to death, by an arrow of jealousy of God shot into their breast. Faith gives the combatant a sight of the glory of God in the face of Jesus ; and so pulls out the arrow, *Jon. ii. 4.* Their patience is wounded, that it can no longer stand ; faith brings the promise, *Hab. ii. 3.* *For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lye : though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry,* and it sets patience to its feet again. It brings the leaves of the tree of life, applies them to the wounds, and heals them ; so the fight is renewed.

(4.) It carries on the fight, and obtains the victory : *1 Pet. v. 9.* *Whom resist, stedfast in the faith.* *1 John v. 4.* *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* It is by faith the enemy is put to flight, that partial victories are obtained during this life, and that the total victory is obtained at death, *2 Tim. iv. 7. 8.* Thus by faith the martyrs swimm'd through a sea of blood, to the other side. And hence,

4thly, The great design of the enemy is to weaken faith, and to wrest it away out of the combatant's hand. It was by unbelief of the threatening of the first covenant, that Satan ruined the world at first : and now his great business is, to keep men from believing the promise of the second covenant. He knows full well their strength lies there ; and take away that, they shall be as other men, that he may do with them what he will.

Lastly, The great design of a holy God, in that fight, is the trial of faith. Hence says the Apostle, *1 Pet. i. 6. 7.* *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be)*

be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Faith acts in trusting an unseen God, believing his word, living upon the credit of the promise. Thus the Lord will have his people to go through the wilderness of this world, walking by faith, not by sight. When they come to heaven, the trial of faith is over: so there is no more fight.

II. The second thing is, to shew in what respects it is a good fight.

1. The cause is good. Many fight to carry their ill cause by force, and their fightings proceed from an eager desire to satisfy their lusts, *James iv. 1. 2.* But here is a good fight for a good cause, cleaving to the Lord over the belly of all difficulties; laying hold, and keeping hold, of eternal life. It is the cause of God, the cause of Christ, the cause of the sinner's eternal salvation, which cannot be but a good cause, to endeavour the maintenance of against all opposers.

2. It is an honourable fight, worthy of a man of true valour and magnanimity, *1 Cor. ix. 25. 26. 27. Prov. xvi. 32.* The men of the world boast themselves of their strength in making their part good against weak worms like themselves. In the mean time they are slaves to the devil and their lusts, and have neither heart nor hand to resist them, but are captive at pleasure. But the believer in his fight encounters more formidable enemies: *Eph. vi. 12. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

3. There is a good captain in this fight, the Lord Jesus Christ, under whose standard the believer fights, *Heb. ii. 10.* He went on the head of all the fighting company, and overcame; and he calls his people to make their way through an army which he has already broken: *Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* He is ever at their hand, and the cause is his; it must therefore needs be a good fight.

4. In regard of the good that is got even of the partial victories; the believers being helped to stand shocks, and
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get over them, though the war be not ended. Hence says the Apostle, *Rom. v. 3. 4. 5. We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.* The sharp trials of faith are hard in the time: but a review of bypast dangers, of the Lord's working for the soul in the time of the combat, gives an exquisite pleasure: so that the man comes to say, *It is good that I was afflicted.*

5. *lastly*, In regard the final and complete victory in the end, is sure. Hence says the Apostle, *Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* Many a battle the believer may lose in the course of the war: he may be shamefully foiled: but though the enemy prevail so far, yet the believer shall always be the conqueror at the end. The men of *Ai* got an advantage against *Joshua's* men: but it did not last; they got a complete victory at length over the men of *Ai*.

III. *Why is the Christian life, in the disposal of holy providence, made a fight?* No doubt the Lord could have given his people a constant sunshine as well on this side as the other side of death, and cleared the way of those armed adversaries that are ready to attack them.

1. That the members may be conformed to their head in their passage through the world. The life that our Lord Jesus had in the world, was a fighting life all along, till he left the world, and entered into his glory. It is very agreeable then, that his followers should find it so, and so be conformed to their head in suffering as well as in reigning: *Rom. viii. 17. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* 2 *Tim. ii. 12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.*

2. That the nothingness, and utter unworthiness of the creature, which is to wear the crown of glory for ever, may convincingly appear; so as they themselves and all others may see it is owing purely to free grace, not to them, *Deut. viii. 2.* We find the Lord usually laid those very low whom he minded to raise up on high; as in the case of *Joseph*, *Moses*, and *David*: and this to stain the pride of all glory, that they might see their own unworthiness, and that it was wholly of free grace, and owing to no merit of theirs. The Lord accordingly minding to bring a select company into heaven at length, in the first place brings them into the wilderness. There they are stung with serpents,

scorched with thirst, &c. whereby much corruption and weakness appears in them, &c. and afterwards they are brought unto a wealthy place.

3. For the greater confusion of the grand adversary, who attacked him in person in the world, and whom he causeth poor weak creatures to triumph over after they have maintained a fight with him, *Rom. xvi. 20. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* Our Lord Jesus overcame and baffled *Satan's* temptations in the wilderness. He triumphed over him on the cross, where the heat of the battle was: *Col. ii. 15. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* Satan renews the battle against his members on earth: and what is the issue? The stripling *David*, with his sling and stone, lays *Goliath* on the green. The weak believer through faith confounds the united wit and force of men and devils, *Luke x. 19.* which tends to the greater confusion of the enemy.

4. For the greater glory of the captain of their salvation, the more full display of the freedom of grace, and the efficacy of his blood and Spirit. (1.) Every wound the believer gets in this fight, puts a new jewel in Christ's crown. For every new wound requires a new plaister from Christ. That is a new item for the believer in the debt-book of free grace, and so puts him more in free grace's debt. (2.) Every wound the believer gives in this fight, considering his weakness and feckleness, and the strength and subtilty of the enemy, does the same.

5. For that they may have a greater variety of experiences: *Rom. v. 4. Patience worketh experience; and experience, hope.* The exercised Christian is the man of most experience. There is a great variety of promises in the covenant, for the various cases the children of God may be in: and that his people may have experience of the relish of these promises, he brings them into the cases to which these promises are adapted. Who finds the sap of that promise, *Ps. xxxiii. 16. Bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure,* like those that are put to a fight of faith for their daily bread; or of that, *Deut. xxxii. 36. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left,* like those whose case is brought to an extremity in point of hopelessness?

6. *lastly,* That heaven may be the more sweet to them, when

when they come to it. It is in this respect that heaven is called a *place of comfort*, Luke xvi. 25. *wiping away of tears, rest from labours*. None will find rest so sweet as the wearied man. A child of God come to his journey's end, after many falls and risings, after many ups and downs; set ashore after a dangerous voyage, will sing the song of *Moses* and of the Lamb in a higher strain, than if he had never been in danger from his first setting out.

IV. The fourth thing is, to shew *why their fight is called a fight of faith*. The reason is, because by that means all the glory of the victories obtained redounds to free grace, not to the sinner himself: *Rom. iv. 16. It is of faith, that it might be by grace*. The Lord is jealous of his own glory, and sinful man is very apt to ascribe something to himself; therefore faith is pitched upon; for its activity lies in these two.

1. In carrying of the sinner quite out of himself, and from off his own bottom. Hence believers are said to *have no confidence in the flesh*, Philip. iii. 3. The unbeliever's great strength lies in summing together all the power of his natural abilities, and in confidence thereof trying the battle. But faith makes a man to be denied to all his own abilities, and not to lean to himself, his light, strength, &c. And therefore as the fire burns keenest in the sharpest frost, so faith acts most vigorously, when sentence of death is passed on all probable means, as *Abraham's faith*.

2. In leaning upon the Lord for all. Hence believers are also said to *rejoice in Christ Jesus*, Philip. iii. 3. Faith goes out to the battle in the name of the Lord, holding by his promise, trusting that he will make it out; and so it is the mouth of the soul that sucks the sap of the promise, by a fiducial application of it, and trusting in it.

V. I will touch at some particular fights of faith, the Christian may have in his course heavenward, such as,

1. In a call to some more than ordinary work or duty.
2. In desertion.
3. In temptations from Satan.
4. In afflictions.
5. With this present evil world.
6. With sin.
7. With death.

FIRST, There is a fight of faith, in a call to some more than

than ordinary work or duty. Sometimes the Lord takes trial of his people by calling them to some extraordinary piece of duty. Thus *Abraham* was called out to this field, *Gen. xxii. 1.* ; *Moses* to bring the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, *Exod. iii.* ; and *Jonah*, to preach to the *Ninevites*.

Here the believer gets his hands full, as much as he is able to wrestle with ; yea, and sometimes as much as lays him by, his faith failing. Thus *Jonah* was so put to it in this fight, that he goes to fly towards *Tarshish*, to shift the duty.

Now, what makes the difficulty here, are, (1.) The hardness of the work in itself, as in *Abraham's* case. (2.) A deep sense of our inability for it, as in the case of *Moses*, when commanded to bring the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, *Exod. iv. 10.* For sometimes it is that which the Christian seems of all things to be most unfit for. (3.) The great danger there may be in it, so that the Christian must run a risk in setting about it. Sometimes he must risk his reputation, as in *Jonah's* case ; sometimes he must risk even his safety or life. Here there is a particular fight of faith to be fought. And therein faith is to be exerted,

1. In complying with God's call in the faith of the promise of strength for it. Hence says the Apostle, *Philip. iv. 13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* God never calls his people to any duty, but what they have ground to expect furniture for from himself in the way of believing : No man goeth a warfare on his own charges. God's call implies a promise of furniture : *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright.* And God suits the back to the burden. It is much alike then whether it be little work and little strength, or great work and strength conform.

2. In following the duty, in the faith of divine protection, as far as he sees good. Faith trusts God with one's safety in the way of duty, according to the promise, *Psal. xci. 11. He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* As long as one is found in the way where God bids him go, he may be sure God will set a hedge about him, and make all work together for his good.

SECONDLY, There is a fight of faith in *desertion*. Here the believer is on the dark mountains in a special manner, the Lord in the depth of sovereign wisdom withdrawing from him. And in this case there may be several things very heavy.

1. Darkness covering the believer's spirit, *Jf. i. 10.* whereby he goes mourning without the sun. Their former light

is taken away, and clouds and mists arise, so that they cannot know their way.

2. Indisposition for duty, proceeding sometimes from a listlessness to communion with God, *Cant. v. 2.* sometimes from the extremity of trouble, *Psal. lxxvii. 4.* So that the soul is not more unfit for duty, than when there is most need.

3. An army of doubts and fears attacking them, doubting of their love to God, and God's love to them, *Psal. lxxvii. 7.* downwards.

4. The terrors of God set in battle-array against them, *Job vi. 4.* They remember God, and are troubled, *Psal. lxxvii. 3.*

The man is carried captive from *Sion* to *Sinai*; the discharge is lost, and the law bends up a process against him. God appears as an enemy, *Psal. lxxxviii. 15.*

Now, faith's part herein this fight is,

1st, To justify God in the dispensation, *Psal. xxii. 3.* and to submit to sovereignty, *Job ii. 9. 10.* believing he doth all things well. The man has to do with him whose will is the supreme law, and so must not adventure to call him to an account.

2^{dly}, To cleave to God in Christ by a faith of adherence; saying with *Job, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job xiii. 15.* He must resolutely adhere, Over the belly of discouragements.

3^{dly}, To believe an outgate in due time; saying with the church, *Mic. vii. 8. When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.* Hence is that exhortation, *Is. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.*

4^{thly}, To hold the conclusion of our interest, notwithstanding of the arguments drawn from the divine dispensation to prove us naught. Hence says *Job, chap. xxvii. 5. 6. Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

5^{thly}, Continuing in the way of duty notwithstanding; as *Job* did, *chap. i. 20. 21.* who, notwithstanding all the calamities that befel him, blessed God.

THIRDLY, There is a fight of faith in temptations from *Satan*. He is the declared enemy of God and mankind. Natural men he tempts to sin, to get them kept the surer in

in his gripes ; the godly, that he may mar their communion with God, their comfort and growth, and may make their lives bitter, if he cannot get them back entirely to his service ; both, that he may get God dishonoured by them. The temptations of Satan are too many to be reckoned up particularly ; but I shall take notice of these eight things following, in which ye would set yourselves to fight the fight of faith.

1. Temptations to sin, after some seeming or real enjoyment of God in ordinances or providences. Nothing is more ordinary than a subtil or furious attack of the devil on a person brought into a better case than ordinary, *Cant. v. 1. 2.* Thus after solemn ordinances. So after Christ's baptism, *Matth. iv. 1.* ; and the disciples after the first communion. Satan is a proud, envious spirit. The better it is with a soul, the more likely is the honour of God to be advanced, and their own salvation. And neither of these can that malicious spirit endure. In this case faith is to manage a fight, by,

1st, Believing the Scripture warnings and instances of this : *Luke xxii. 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. 2 Cor. xii. 7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.* Hereby the soul will be set to watch before the temptation come, and so be in better case to resist it ; and when it is come, will see that it is no more than what God's people have met with.

2^{dly}, Resisting, not in confidence of vows, purposes, and resolutions, the present frame of the heart, or grace already received ; but in confidence of the grace that is in Christ, and the new supplies of it : *2 Cor. xii. 9. My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Tim. ii. 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* It is confidence in what we have in ourselves that mars all.

2. Temptations to the sin that one is most easily led aside unto : *Heb. xii. 1. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.* Satan will be sure to attack you on the weak side, where he is most likely to prevail. He knows what is the sin of one's constitution, age, calling, and the like, and there to set on where the wall is weakest.

But

But he that minds for heaven, must resist, and fight against him, and that in faith,

1st, Believing the necessity of overcoming, even in that particular: *Matth. v. 29. 30. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.* Men would do well to remember that there the one thing lacking, which ruins all, may lie, *Mark x. 21.* And if the devil can get the man kept under the dominion of any one lust, it will serve his purpose for that man's eternal ruin, though he have otherwise many good things about him.

2^{dly}, Believing, that such temptations may be overcome and got mastered: *Luke xvii. 6. If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.* These temptations men do so naturally incline to comply with, that they are ready to think, it is in vain to offer to resist them, for it will not do, *Jer. ii. 25. Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* This is the language of unbelief, which faith must contradict, if ope would stand.

3^{dly}, Believing, that, in the use of appointed means, he shall overcome, through grace and strength from the Lord: *Mark xi. 24. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* This faith makes the soul in this case like a giant refreshed with wine, opposing Christ's promised strength to its own weakness, and the force of the temptation; and so brings it off victorious, *Is. xl. ult. and xlv. 24.*

3. Temptations to the grossest sins. No body is out of hazard of these, while in this world, *1 Cor. x. 12. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* Satan makes great hellish gain by these; he wastes and defiles the conscience, gets God greatly dishonoured, and religion exposed to reproach by them. He gets the mask pulled off many hypocrites by them; and gets sincere Christians sometimes made to go halting to the grave by them, *Prov. vii. 26.* They that would see heaven must resist, and resist in faith,

1st, Believing that they are snares for soul-ruin, according to the word, *Prov. vi. 27. 28. Can a man take fire in his bosom,*

bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? and chap. i. 17. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. It is the work of faith to discern, by the glass of the word, Satan's devices, and arts of destruction; that the soul, seeing them so, may conceive a horror of them. Hence says the Apostle, *Rom. xii. 9. Abhor that which is evil.*

2dly, Believing that it is not the temptation, but the yielding to it, that will provoke God against you. I own, that such temptations are often sent as a punishment for other sins, as *Judas's* covetousness was punished with a temptation to betray Christ for money: and by such means God often shakes himself loose of hypocrites, as in *Judas's* case, and spues them out of his mouth, leaving them to yield to them, *Rev. iii. 16.* And it is often the thought of serious souls, that temptations to sins so very gross are a sign of the Lord's hatred against them: yet that is a plain mistake; for what sin is there so gross but a child of God may be tempted to it? *Asaph* was tempted to deny a providence, *Psal. lxxiii. 13.* *Agur* saw himself in hazard of Atheistical contempt of God, *Prov. xxx. 9.* *Job* was tempted to blaspheme and curse God, *Job i. 11. 12.* to self-murder, chap. vii. 15. Christ himself was tempted to distrust, self-murder, and worshipping of the devil, *Matth. iv.* The faith of these things will be strengthening under such horrid temptations.

3dly, Believing the word condemning and forbidding these sins, and so opposing Heaven's word of command and threatening unto the temptation. Thus our Lord resisted all his temptations in faith, *Matth. iv.* This is faith's wielding the sword of the Spirit against the tempter, which is fitted to awe the heart with the authority of God, and fill it with abhorrence of the temptation. Whenever the temptation is given, there should presently be some apt scripture to oppose to it in faith; and as oft as the temptation is repeated, do ye repeat the word in faith, and Satan will fly at length. So in such cases ye should have such scriptures as these ready, *Deut. xxviii. 58. 59. Psal. xiv. 1. 1 John iii. 15. Eph. v. 5. 6.*

4thly, Believing the promises suited to the case. There is no temptation any can be in, but there is a promise suited for it in the word, which is the armour faith must wield in order to overcome: *1 Cor. x. 13. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able;*

but

but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. *James iv. 7. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* And in the faith of the promise make resistance, not doubting but it shall be accomplished in your case: and according to your faith of the promise in the use of means, so shall it be; as with *Peter* on the water, and the army against *Amalek* with *Moses's* hands lift up.

4. Temptations artfully suited to one's circumstances. Satan has a hellish art of framing his temptations upon his observation of people's circumstances, wherein they are most likely to take with them. Thus Christ being an hungered, the devil tempted him to distrust, *Matth. iv. 3.* *Job* was tempted to blaspheme and despair under his afflictions. *Achan* was tempted to steal, a fair opportunity offering. Thus he has his temptations suited to the aged and the young, the poor and the rich, the jovial and those of a sorrowful heart. He knows, that in such a case he rows with the stream, and is most likely to prevail. But resist ye in faith,

1st, Believing, according to the word, that Satan watcheth all opportunities against you, *1 Pet. v. 8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* This will make you to watch against him, when the enemy has such an advantage against you that he will not let slip. They had not need to sleep who are within the enemy's gunshot.

2^{dly}, Believing that God's eye is on you, and the Lord has you upon your trials in that particular, to which ye are so tempted. Hence says *Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Mens corrupt hearts are apt to think, when a fair occasion of sinning lies before them, that now is the time to gratify the lust: but happy were they could they think, Now, here is a trial for me, and God is looking on to see how I will behave.

3^{dly}, Believing that as the devil suits his temptations, so Christ suits his help and assistance, to the circumstances of poor sinners: so that resolving to resist, you may say, There are more with us than against us, *1 Cor. x. 13.* forecited. Whatever way the stream runs for your compliance with the temptation, stretch out your withered hands to swim against it, in faith of your throughbearing upon the ground of God's faithfulness, *Jf. xl. 28. 29. 30.*

5. Temptations from one sin to another. Satan knows, that one sin makes way for another; and that to get in his finger once, is the way to get in his whole hand after. So

Eve's lustful look to the forbidden fruit, made way for her taking, taking for eating, that for giving to her husband and his eating ; and so the whole world's ruin was completed, *Gen. iii. 6.* Thus it is usual for Satan to prevail with those that have yielded to him in one temptation, to lie for covering it again. And some sins natively lead to others ; as in the well-known story of the three sins one was tempted to. Thus drunkenness makes men an easy prey to uncleanness, *Prov. xxiii. 33.* And some when once the devil has got them to be harlots, the temptation from that, and from their credit, has made them murderers : some murdering their children after they are born, some before they are born, going about to destroy their conceptions ; the latter as well as the former murderers, and guilty of innocent blood, in a degree beyond *Onan, Gen. xxxviii. 9.* whom the Lord himself slew as a murderer. But ye must resist, and that in faith. Happy they who resist the beginnings of sin, who crush the viper in the bud : but where ye are fallen into the snare, fight against the temptation to add sin to sin, or to cover one sin with another,

1st, Believing, that there is mercy for penitents, but none for those who harden themselves in their wickedness : *Prov. xxviii. 13.* *He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper : but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* Nay, there is not a more ready way under heaven to expose sinners to the arrows of God's wrath, than to be hardened in wickedness, *Deut. xxix. 19. 20.*

2dly, Believing, that the design of the temptation to one sin from another, is plainly the ruin of the soul, that the devil may get the person in so deep into the mire, that he may never win out again. Thus he drove *Judas* from the betraying of Christ, into an attack against his own life. For thus the one sin becomes a need-nail to the other, shutting up the soul under the guilt of it, not to be removed but by a miracle of mercy.

3dly, Believing, that all the shame, and pain, and misery that can follow in the world, upon one sin, is not to be laid in the balance with the wrath of God, that is kindled against the sinner by running into another sin because he has been guilty of one, *Matth. xvi. 26.* This all such as so do will find, either in this world, or in hell, when God shall make all their sins together lie on their own heads. For sooner or later sin will find out the guilty, *Numb. xxxii. 23.*

4thly, Believing the promise of pardon through the Redeemer's

deemer's blood, however atrocious and hainous the sin is : *1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* Some are led on from one sin to another, because they have no sense of the ill and danger of it to their souls : the faith of God's testimony of their sin would cure this, and make them cry out, Undone. Others have a secret despair of finding mercy, and so they proceed from evil to worse ; but the faith of the promise of pardon would cure that : *Is. i. 18. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wooll.*

5thly, Believing the promise of renewed strength even to those that have slighted it before, *Jer. iii. 14.* They who have been foiled by one temptation, may get victory over another. They may have taken a large step on the devil's ground, who yet looking to Christ by faith, may stop and go no further, *Psal. lxxv. 3.*

6. Temptations suddenly and surprisngly cast in, and resolutely continued, *2 Cor. xii. 8.* These are Satan's *fiery darts*, *Eph. vi. 16.* This is a furious assault of the devil, which he often makes use of in blasphemous or other diabolical injections into the minds of poor sinners ; where the soul is in no better case than one, who defending a thatched house, no sooner gets one fire-ball quenched, but another is thrown in on him. If at any time this be your case, set to vigorous resistance, in faith,

1st, Believing, that these are your affliction and trial, but no further your sin than you yield or consent to them. This is clear from the horrible Satanical suggestions made to our Saviour, *Matth. iv.* while yet there was no sin in him. Satan does with these as harlots laying their brats at the door of honest matrons, so confounding, perplexing, and hurrying the poor tempted sinner, that he is apt to take the voice of Satan for his own voice. But unless ye yield to them, and embrace them, Satan, and only he, shall be accountable for them.

2dly, Adhering resolutely by faith to the Lord Jesus, in that hour and power of darkness, as your Lord and Saviour did. Thus our Lord gave us an example, *John xii. 27. Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour : but for this cause came I unto this hour.* If ever that resolute adherence is necessary, it is necessary at such a time : *Is. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the*

Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. The great end and design of the tempter by these furious attacks, is, to drive the poor tossed tempted creature from his hold of Christ : but we should be like the traveller in the windy day, that holds his cloak the faster the harder it blows.

3dly, Believing, that there is no safety in parleying with the tempter, but ever and anon the temptation is to be rejected with abhorrence. It was *Eve's* parley with the tempter, that laid the foundation of the ruin of the world by the first sin, *Gen. iii.* Setting on the *Second Adam*, he got his answer, a refusal, with abhorrence of his proposal, immediately, *Matth. iv.* These suggestions are not so far to be listened to, as that one should think with himself whether he should comply with them or no. *The Lord rebuke thee*, is the short and safe answer.

4thly, Believingly opposing the Lord's word to them, which condemns and forbids the things tempted to. In those temptations our Saviour met with, which were shocking even to the light of nature, it is remarkable he still opposes scripture to them, *Matth. iv. 7. 10.* For that is a divine ordinance for repelling of temptation, to be reiterated in faith as often as Satan repeats his temptation.

5thly, Believing, that there is grace in Christ Jesus sufficient for repelling these most violent temptations, and that it is sufficient for you in your case in particular. Hence says our Lord, *2 Cor. xii. 9. My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* If Satan prevail so far as to cause the tempted to think, that the violence of the temptation is so great that it is not possible for them to stand against it ; this is such a weakening of faith, that the breach can hardly miss to be made there, as a breaking forth of an high wall in an instant. And Satan cannot obtain it of the tempted, but by turning his eyes away from Christ into himself. Therefore, in that hour of darkness, let the tempted keep his eye on the fulness of strength in Christ for him : *2 Tim. ii. 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

6thly, Believing the promise of victory to the poor struggler with temptation : *Jam. iv. 7. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* The faith of the victory is necessary to animate the tempted to continue the struggle, and will make him in the temptation to be like a giant refreshed with wine,
and

and will undoubtedly bring him off victorious at length. For there is the decision, *According to thy faith, so be it unto thee.*

7. Temptations striking at the very foundations of faith and religion, such as against the being of God, and the divine authority of the scriptures, *Psal. xiv. 1. and lxxiii. 13.* These are most dangerous, but they are what the devil himself cannot prevail with himself to believe; though he fain would, yet he cannot be an Atheist, nor an infidel as to the scriptures, *Jam. ii. 19.* But he sometimes would palm these foul Atheistical principles on poor sinners, even saints of God, who want not an Atheistical principle in them to work upon. If at any time Satan attack you with such temptations, ye must resist them,

1st, Believing, that they are the spawn of the old serpent in the corrupt heart, the hissing of the crooked serpent: *Psal. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* Hence it is said of the beast in *Rev. xiii. 6.* that he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. This is the reception they should get immediately, faith discerning the devil's cloven foot in them at their very first appearance. Whether they come immediately from the devil, or from the corrupt heart itself moved by Satan, it is all a case in this point; believe them to be hellish, devilish, most abominable, and to be treated with the utmost abhorrence. And the sooner ye give them that entertainment, the victory will be the more easy and speedy.

2^{dly}, Resolutely believing the foundation-principles which the temptation strikes against, over the belly of the Satanical objections mustered up against them before you, though ye be not able to answer those objections or loose the difficulties: *Heb. xi. 6. He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* 2 *Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* And hence is that exhortation of the Apostle, *Eph. vi. 16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

There is not wanting store of reasons to support the great foundation-principles of religion; and nothing but sophistry can be brought against them, which reason sufficiently enlightened may discover. There are convincing arguments
for

for the being of a God, and the authority of the scriptures, to be used against Atheists. But when ye are assaulted with these temptations, I dare not advise you to the way of disputing with the tempter, but to the way of believing ; not to the bringing reasons for these principles against him, and answering his hellish objections against them, but to a resolute holding of the conclusion, over the belly of all his objections ; because,

(1.) They are first principles, and ye are not obliged to dispute them with any, unless it were to keep an opposer from ruin, as in the case of Atheists. But this has no place in a combat with the devil, of whom there is no hope.

(2.) Because the devil is an intercommuned spirit, with whom we are not to commune and enter into reasoning without a special call. Our Lord himself, though he could have reasoned the devil out of it, yet he took not that method, but just opposed to his temptations the testimony of scripture. And it is certainly the safest way for us, whatever we have to say in temptation, to say it to God, rather than to the devil.

(3.) Because the devil is a disputant too subtle for us, and in the way of wit and reason may quickly over-reach us. I make no question, but the devil is a philosopher and divine far beyond any of our greatest scholars : and men may expect from him most subtle turns of wit to elude their arguments, and to start objections which it will not be easy to answer. And therefore it is not safe to engage in dispute with him.

But do ye resolutely believe the principles you have received on divine authority, which ye have no reason to quit on the devil's contrary testimony, though he pretend reason for it, since he is known to be a liar and a murderer. This the Apostle prescribes, *Eph. vi. 16.* forecited. And this method of holding by the conclusion resolutely, while the sinner is not capable to answer the objections, is recommended to us by the practice of the saints, *Jer. xii. 1.* *Matth. xv. 25.* Therefore, while Satan casts in these temptations, or raises them in your heart, enter your protestation against them, (crying out of violence and wrong), that you allow them not, you do believe, and will through his grace believe these foundations, and will not quit them.

3dly, Believing and applying the promise of saving illumination, and teaching of the Spirit. It is light from the

the Lord himself that must dispel the mists that Satan raises in the corrupt heart, wherein these horrible temptations do take place. Hence says our Lord to *Peter*, *Matth. xvi. 17. Blessed art thou Simſon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* *1 Cor. ii. 12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.* And this light is brought in, by faith's applying the promises suited to the case. Of these are many, such as *Heb. viii. 11. John vii. 17. and xiv. 21.* And the tempted should lift his eyes unto the Lord, that he may so shine in his word, into his soul, as that his light may dispel the darkness, according to his promise.

4thly, Believing the scripture-accounts of these things, of those mysteries of providence from whence Satan raiseth these temptations. Satan sometimes observes the spirits even of saints fretted and rankled with long and sore afflictions, their prayers not heard and answered, the wicked prospering, and they in great distress: and here he plants his cannon, to beat down from these, even the foundations of all religion. Thus he dealt with *Asaph*, *Psal. lxxiii. 12. 13. 14.* And he resists him by believing the scripture-account of these mysteries of providence, *vers. 16. 17. 18.* This is the way to undermine Satan's battery, to rase the foundations on which he builds.

What will that malicious spirit make of the long and sore distresses of God's people, and the prosperity of the wicked, against the being or nature of God, and the certainty of his word? The sun may hide his head long in a stormy winter; but will any say therefore, there is no sun, or that the ordinances of the heavens fail and misgive? Is not one day with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day? Doth not the scripture shew, that the wicked are raised on high, that they may fall more grievously? Is there not a judgment to come, and a long eternity enough to shew God's good pleasure in the vessels of his mercy, and his wrath against the vessels of wrath, though neither the godly have two summers, nor the wicked two winters, in one year? Have not prayers lain long over, that yet have got a gracious answer at length? *Zech. vii. 3. James v. 11.*

Thus believing is the method of resisting in these temptations. Howbeit, when ye are out of the shock of temptation in these matters, it would be of good use to fortify

tify and confirm your faith of the foundation-principles of religion, with all the reasons and arguments ye can draw together for them.

8. *Lastly*, Temptations of delusion. This is a kind of temptation most hard to resist, Satan therein transforming himself into an angel of light, and pressing to sin under the notion of duty, 2 Cor. xi. 14. It is a great trial of faith, *Matth.* xxiv. 24.; a great and fearful plague where it takes, *Jf.* lxvi. 4. 2 *Thess.* ii. 11. 12. and has always a lamentable upshot, according to the nature thereof, *Jf.* i. ult. But ye must resist in faith,

1st, Believing your own weakness and darkness in yourselves, together with the diligence of Satan the great seducer, according to the scripture, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.* 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* It is self-conceit, a high opinion of our own great attainments, that most readily betrays men into the snare of delusion; for these are in little fear of Satan's wiles, and so are the more easily caught in his snare.

2^{dly}, Believing the holy scripture to be the only rule of faith and manners, and a full and perfect rule; and to improve it so: *Jf.* viii. 20. *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* There is an itch in the nature of man, to be wise above what is written; and sometimes Satan has made his gain thereof, by visions, voices, dreams, impressions, and impulses. But in all such cases take heed to yourselves, that Satan delude you not: but bring the matter to the word written, and thereby examine it. What is of God will abide the trial by that touchstone; and the more closely it is brought to the word, it will appear the more clear: what is not so, will lose its lustre there, as ill wares brought out to the light of the sun. And therefore those under delusion are mighty loath to examine by the word: 1 *John* iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* 2 Pet. i. 18. 19. *And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise*
in

in your hearts. The holy scripture is the stated way of communication betwixt heaven and us : it is from the Holy Spirit, and it is not possible that he should contradict himself, *Jf. lix. ult.* Therefore though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, *Gal. i. 8.*

Lastly, Believing the promise of guidance into all truth, *John xvi. 13.* Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come. *Psal. xxv. 9.* The meek will he guide in judgment : and the meek will he teach his way. The soul thus emptied of itself, and leaning to the Lord Christ for his teaching, will not want teaching in the use of means. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. xxviii. 7.* The Lord is my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Our Lord Jesus is the appointed leader and guide of his people, *Jf. lv. 4.* He is given of God for a light of the people. He has set us our way-marks in this as in all other cases. Divine manifestations are always sanctifying and humbling ; delusions puff up, and leave the soul always as unholy as they found it. Divine manifestations have ever an immediate tendency to holiness ; delusions have always a tendency to unholiness. And even when duty is pressed in delusion, it will readily be found either out of season, or not the duty of one's station, or to have some such flaw in it or other.

FOURTHLY, There is a fight of faith in afflictions : *Heb. x. 32.* Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions. One may as well think to travel without the flies annoying him in a hot summer-day, as to go through the world without meeting with afflictions. They are common to good and bad. In the Lord's way one cannot miss them : *Acts xiv. 22.* We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. In the way of sin one will meet them too : *Eccl. x. 8.* He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it ; and whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Sovereignty distributes them, to some more, to others less ; but to all, some. The native effect of afflictions on the guilty creature, is to drive it away from God, (however they are overturned to good) ; even as the lash of a whip natively drives

away him that is lashed, from him that lasheth. So that it is owing to something else that they do good to sinners. And that,

1. To a word of divine appointment. Afflictions are an ordinance of God for good to poor sinners: *Is. xxvii. 9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* And a divine appointment will alter the nature and operation of a thing. The savour of burnt flesh is very unpleasant, but the divine ordinance of sacrificing made it a sweet savour, *Gen. viii. 21.* Clay laid on one's eyes is a mean natively to make one blind: yet, by virtue of a divine ordinance, it cured blindness, *John ix. 6. 7.* So afflictions natively, or of themselves, drive away the soul from God, but, by virtue of a divine ordinance, lead it to him.

2. To a receiving of them in faith: *2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.* See *Heb. xi. 35—39.* Whoever would profit by a divine ordinance, must receive it in faith, *Heb. iv. 2.* For to every divine ordinance there is a promise annexed to be believed: and the promise being believed, the ordinance has its effect. So that we see afflictions do good to some, to others no good, but ill: Why? It is faith and unbelief that make the difference.

Wherefore ye must fight in faith against the native tendency of afflictions in themselves. And if ye ask, What is that tendency in afflictions on the guilty creature, which he must fight against? and, How must one fight in faith against it? I answer in the six following particulars. It is,

1. To impress the person with the apprehension that God is his enemy, and that he is seeking his ruin: *2 Kings vi. ult.* Even *Job* himself was carried away with this hard thought of God, *Job xxxiii. 10. 11. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.* Guilt lying on the conscience, makes it full of hard thoughts of God, and terrible forebodings. Whenever the guilty soul hears from heaven by affliction, it is ready to strike in his mind, Now this is for my sin, and God is proclaiming war against me to ruin me. Hence affliction is several times the

means

means of awakening the secure sinner ; though he can never come to God till he believe.

Now, ye must fight against this in faith,

1st, Believing, that though all your afflictions are infallible signs of God's hatred of your sin, and his seeking the ruin of it ; yet no affliction on you in this world can be such a sign of God's hatred of your persons, and his seeking your ruin, *Eccl. ix. 1. 2.* No, no ; God's dearest children may have as heavy afflictions on their backs, as any other persons in the world, *Psal. lxxiii. 12. 14.* And no wonder, since God's only begotten Son had the heaviest burden of affliction that ever was on the back of a man.

2^{dly}, Believing, that afflictions are God's ordinance for good to the afflicted, even as really as is the preaching of the word to them : *Prov. xxix. 15. The rod and reproof give wisdom.* They are the discipline of God's house, as the word is the doctrine of it : *Heb. xii. 6. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* So the design of the rod is your good, as the design of physic is the health of the patient ; though, in the mean time, one, by misguiding under it, may indeed kill himself ; even as one, by not complying with the design of the affliction, may wound his own soul. It is certain, that afflictions have a word of divine appointment for good ; there is a blessing annexed to them by promise : but how can ye share of it, if ye do not believe them to be an ordinance of God for good ?

3^{dly}, Believing, that God by these means is seeking your good, as using towards you the very same means that he does towards the dearest of his children : *2 Pet. iii. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness), but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* *Rev. iii. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten : be zealous therefore and repent.* Should a physician give you the very same remedy that he gives to his own child, sick of your disease ; what but unreasonable jealousy should make you think he designs ill to you ? And what but unbelief then can it be that makes you think, that God seeks your ruin by affliction, with which he works the cure of his own ?

4^{thly}, Believing the promise annexed to that ordinance, with application to yourselves, That your affliction, through his grace, shall do you good : *Is. xxvii. 9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit*

to take away his sin. Zeph. iii. 12. 13. *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies: neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.* This is the way to partake of the efficacy of the ordinance of affliction; and it is the faith of it that makes the saints welcome the rod, to be patient under it, and to comply with the design of it, Micah vii. 8. 9.; while those that expect no good of them, get as little many times.

2. To take all heart and hand from him in his approaches to God. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. lxxvii. 3. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.* The guilty conscience takes up the affliction, and just knocks him down with it, fells him with it, before the Lord. He is filled with consternation before an angry God, and his heart fails, and can look for no good at the Lord's hand, 1 John iii. 20. 21. The affliction lies so heavy upon the poor sinner, that he cannot think there is any hope of God's hearing his prayers, or making him welcome to the throne of grace. Hence says Job, chap. ix. 16. 17. *If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.* But ye must fight against this in faith,

1st, Believing, that there are bowels of compassion in God, while nothing but frowns appear (*Psal. cxxx. 1. 7.*) in his countenance. And it is faith's work, to take up these bowels of mercy in an afflicting God. *Quest.* What way shall one perceive them? *Ans.* While ye behold his anger in his providences, ye must look to his word by faith, and there ye will see these bowels of mercy: *Is. xlix. 14.—17. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee. Chap. lxiii. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them, all the days of old.* And ye may be helped hereto, by

by considering the heart of a father smiting his own child ; where, in a sense, the heart goes not along with the hand. Thus the church prays, but in faith : *Is. lxi. 15. 16. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory : where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me ? are they restrained ? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting. And this the church doth, and that on good grounds, Lam. iii. 33. For he doth not afflict willingly [Heb. from his heart], nor grieve the children of men.*

2dly, Believing the testimony of God's word, as to instances of persons that have had God's heart towards them, while his hand has been lying heavy on them. Thus it was with Gideon, *Judg. vi. 12. 13.* Thus it was with Job : he was most dear to God, yet he was given up unto the power of Satan to afflict him. And thus it was with a cloud of witnesses. These things are written for your learning ; that ye, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope.

3dly, Believing the promise of hearing the prayers of the afflicted, with application to yourselves : *Psal. l. 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* Oppose this promise in faith, to the disheartening operation of the affliction upon you before the Lord : take this cordial by the mouth of faith, when ye begin to faint in your approaches to God. So shall ye lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees. Is there a secret whisper, that you are so afflicted that you need not pray ? It is the surmise of unbelief. Say ye, Since I am so afflicted, I am called to pray, *James v. 13. Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray :* and there is a particular encouragement in my case, *Psal. cii. 17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*

3. To fright the sinner away from God. Thus our first parents saw they were naked, and presently fled to hide themselves from the Lord. When the conscience is fired with guilt under affliction, its natural motion is to run away from God : *1 Sam. vi. 20. 21. And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God ? and to whom shall he go up from us ? And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord ; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.*

Hence

Hence the sorrow of the world is said to *work death*, because the more deep one is drenched in it, the farther he goes from God. Satan knows this very well, and therefore is he so eager to have sinners afflicted, and to make their lives bitter with it ; though he is sometimes outshot in his own bow, as in *Job's* case. But ye must fight against this in faith,

1st, Believing, that God sends on afflictions, not to fright the sinner from him, but to bring the sinner to him : *Hos. iv. ult. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.* Chap. v. 1. *Hear ye this, O priests, and hearken, ye house of Israel, and give ye ear, O house of the king ; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.* It is indeed God's ordinary method to bring home runaways and backsliders : *Hos. ii. 6. 7. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them ; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them : then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.* Satan's design is one thing in them, and God's design another : and though Satan row with the stream, a touch from the hand of God on the sinner's heart will carry his purpose.

2^{dly}, Believing, that none can better their case by running away from the Lord : however hard their case may seem with him, they can never mend themselves at another hand. Hence said *Samuel* unto the people, *1 Sam. xii. 21. Turn ye not aside : for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain.* And hence we find, that *Peter* said to Christ, *John vi. 68. Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life.* The sinner under affliction is often like *Hagar*, flying from the face of her mistress *Sarai*, *Gen. xvi. 8.* : and that is the best course which the angel of the Lord directed *Hagar* unto, *vers. 9.* namely, to return to her mistress, and submit herself under her hands. *Jonah* fled from the presence of the Lord, and shunning the journey to *Nineveh*, cast himself into a whale's belly. And those that take that course in their affliction, will not speed better.

3^{dly}, Believing your welcome unto, and certain reconciliation with an offended God through Christ, *2 Cor. v. 19. 20. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,*

not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. God was never so angry with any of Adam's children, but he was ready to lay by his anger for the sake of Christ, apprehended by faith. The whole tenor of the gospel holds out this truth: and the law is suffered to lash the sinner, and afflictions are laid on him, to the very end that he may improve it for his reconciliation with God.

4. To bring the sinner to cast off religion, and to lay aside the duties of it. Hence says Christ of the stony-ground hearers, *Matth. xiii. 21. When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended.* Thus we find a profane generation arguing the vanity of religion, and the duties of it, from their afflicted and low circumstances, *Mal. iii. 14. 15. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* No less a man than *Asaph* was near to have turned Atheist on this very score, under a strong temptation, *Psal. lxxiii. 12. 13. 14. Behold, (says he), these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.* And so it has fared with many, who in their prosperity have kept up a form of religion, that the r spirits have been quite soured as to religion in their adversity, and they have visibly given up with it; like the mixt multitude in the wilderness.

Here is great need to fight the fight of faith,

1st, Believing, that prosperity is not tied to religion, nor yet to irreligion: but which of the ways soever one takes, affliction will meet him in the world, *Eccl. ix. 2. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, &c.* If men take up religion for worldly prosperity, no wonder they be baulked of their expectation, and lay it aside again upon the disappointment. But their laying it aside will not secure them from affliction. Therefore men should look so to religion itself, as to be wedded to it for its intrinsic value. But in the way of religion men may

may find a good conscience under affliction, while they find an ill conscience in the way of casting it off.

2dly, Believing, that the great advantage of religion is to be reaped after the time of trial in this life is over. Hence says our Lord, *Rev. ii. 10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* Chap. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.* Now is our seed-time; and the sowing must be in tears, where the reaping time of joy is to follow. The harvest of glory in heaven comes most full after a wet seed-time.

3dly, Believing, that there is a notable advantage in religion for bearing of afflictions. Hence says the Apostle, *2 Cor. i. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.* There are promises in the covenant, which applied by faith, are full of comfort to the afflicted. The Lord's word is full of light as to the nature, uses, and ends of them: so that the Bible is the best company for those in affliction. This well is deep, and faith must draw.

4thly, Believing, that the promises with respect to affliction, both as to the blessed issue of them in another world, and as to support under them in this world, shall be made out to you. Thus *Asaph* in his affliction fastened his feet, *Psal. lxxiii. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,* (says he), *and afterward receive me to glory.* It is the faith of the upper Canaan, and of provision in the wilderness-world, that fits for the wilderness-life.

5. To provoke the sinner against God, to cause him to murmur against him, quarrel with him, and arraign and condemn in his heart, at least, the conduct of holy providence in the ordering of his lot: *1 Cor. x. 10. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.* *Prov. xix. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.* Hard affliction laid on a man in whom dwelleth a corrupt heart, is apt to raise the black band of impatience, complaining, fretting, murmuring, and practical blasphemy against God; like a stick stirring up a muddy pool, or an ant's nest. It made even a *Job* and *Jeremiah* to curse the day of their birth. *Job* was much overcome with his affliction,

tion, when he expressed himself so indecently, chap. xxx. 21. *Thou art become cruel to me : with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.* Fight against this tendency of affliction in faith,

1st, Believing, that God is a righteous God, and your Sovereign Lord, having all power over you. There may be mysteries of providence in his dealing with us, which we cannot account for : but there can be no unjust step in his procedure with us : *Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect : for all his ways are judgment : a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.* Therefore that conclusion must be stuck to by faith, *Jer. xii. 1. Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee.* We are his own by creation, and have forfeited our mercies by sin ; let faith view him in the throne of sovereignty, and silence us : *Matth. xx. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ?*

2^{dly}, Believing, that you are debtors to mercy for that it is not worse with you than it is ; saying, with the church, *Lam. iii. 22. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* However hard any one's affliction is in this world, it is certain they deserve worse, and God could lay on worse. Hence is that acknowledgment of *Ezra's*, chap. ix. 13. *Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve ;* and that, *Psal. xc. 11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.* This will make one to give thanks for what is kept off, rather than murmur for what is laid on.

3^{dly}, Believing, that there is certainly need for all you meet with : *1 Pet. i. 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* A holy wise God lays no needless afflictions on any : *Lam. iii. 33. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* Nay he gives all by weight and measure, and will not put in one grain beyond what the case requires. What though ye cannot see it ? ye have yet ground to believe it from the word, and may see it in the glass of God's infinite wisdom, the contrivance of which your lot is, *Deut. xxxii. 4.* So that whatsoever he doth to you, is not only well done, but best done in your circumstances, *Eccles. iii. 14.*

4^{thly}, Believing, that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus, all you meet with shall work for your good : *Rom.*

viii. 28. *We know (says the Apostle) that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* God can carry on the good of a person, by that which he is apt to think is for his ruin; as was the case with *Jacob*, when he said unto his sons, *Gen. xlii. 36. Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.* And though the good of them may be long ere it appear, yet where it is believed and hoped for, it will come at length, *Jam. v. 7.* Now, this and all other promises is held forth to you in Christ to be believed, and applied to yourselves.

6. *Lastly*, To cause the sinner harden himself in sorrow. So we render that expression of *Job's*, chap. vi. 10. *I would harden myself in sorrow*; but it is not the sense of that place. Affliction had this bad effect on good *Jacob*, *Gen. xxxvii. 35.* who, when all his sons, and all his daughters, rose up to comfort him concerning the loss of his son *Joseph*, refused to be comforted; and said, *For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning.* It had also this bad effect on *Asaph*, *Psal. lxxvii. 2.* *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord, (says he); my soul refused to be comforted.* Under affliction the heart is apt to sink; and the case sometimes appears so hopeless, that the afflicted looks not after comfort, but staves it off when offered. They bid a solemn farewell as it were to joy and comfort, and draw the sable curtains of sorrow about themselves: they have no comfortable prospect, they look for none, and resolve to hold there. This is dangerous. Fight against it in faith.

1st, Believing the promise of a comfortable outgate at length, with application to your own case. This hardening one's self in sorrow, whatever be the probabilities it is founded on, is the proper fruit of unbelief, and casts discredit on the promises of God, *Psal. ciii. 9.* *He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger for ever.* *Lam. iii. 32.* *But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.* It is faith's work to believe the accomplishment of them, though one cannot see how.

2^{dly}, Believing the promise of a comfortable mixture in the affliction while it lasts. God has given a promise of moderating the trials of believers; *Psal. xxxvii. 24.* *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord uphold-*
eth

eth him with his hand. *II. xxvii. 8.* In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east-wind. And they have had experience of the outmaking thereof, *2 Cor. iv. 8. 9.* We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, (says the Apostle); we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. God has given a promise of strengthening believers to bear their trials, *Deut. xxxiii. 27.* The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. *II. xl. 28. 29. 30. 31.* Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. The Psalmist experienced the accomplishment of this promise, *Psal. cxxxviii. 3.* In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, (says he): and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. God has given a promise of cordials now and then to support them, sweet blinks now and then to refresh them: *Hos. ii. 14.* Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. *Micah vii. 8.* Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.

3dly, Believing, that your patient suffering of affliction is as acceptable to God through Christ, as your doing for God: *2 Tim. ii. 12.* It is a faithful saying, If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. God has several pieces of work that he puts into the hands of his people: some he calls to do great things, others to suffer great things, *Heb. xi.* Whatever it is the Lord carves out to you, ply that; it is what God will accept at thy hand through the Mediator. Suffering is as really service to God, as doing is.

Thus we have seen the evil tendency of afflictions in themselves, and how we are to fight against it by faith. But there are three special cases wherein that force of affliction is greater than ordinary, and requires a strong faith to stand the shock.

1. When a stroke from the hand of the Lord comes up-

on a man in the way of his duty, which he is doing in obedience to the call and command of God. This is apt to make a man stagger, especially when it is a duty others have an ill eye on : for by it God seems to give sentence against the man and his work. When people are going on in an ill way, it is no wonder Heaven works against them ; but when the Lord meets a man as an enemy in the way of duty, that is a great trial, *Psal. lxxi. 11*. It is apt to make one leave duty.

Here is great need to fight in faith,

1st, Believing, that that is no sign that the way you are in, being warranted by the word, is displeasing to God. It has been the trial of the Lord's people, when they have been called to the plainest duty, and have been upon signal pieces of service to God. We are to observe providences, but not to make a Bible of them ; but bring them to the word, and that will open the mysteries of providence. *Jonah* seemed to be favoured by providence when he let his face to go to *Tarshish*, *Jon. i. 3*. yet was he wrong. *Jacob* had God's call to return to his own country, and a promise of the Lord's being with him, *Gen. xxxi. 3*. *Laban* looked on it with an ill eye. But what a train of troubles met he with in his way thither ? such as his meeting with *Esau*, his thigh put out of joint in wrestling with the angel, his domestic trials, &c. And you may read the trials *Moses* met with in his going down to *Egypt*, upon God's command, to redeem the *Israelites*, *Exod. iv. 24*. &c.

2^{dly}, Believing, that God has holy designs in the matter, becoming his own infinite wisdom, which ye may afterwards come to see, if ye see them not in the time ; though in the mean time he is pleased with your way. Hence said our Lord to *Peter*, *John xiii. 7*. *What I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter*. Sometimes he designs to correct for some mismanagement in the setting about the duty, as in *Moses's* case for not circumcising his son, *Exod. iv. 24. 25*. ; sometimes to hide pride from mens eyes, as in the Apostle's case, *2 Cor. xii. 7*. and as in the case of the children of *Israel* their being spoiled by the children of *Benjamin*, *Judg. xx. 18*.—26. And this he doth always for the trial of his people, their faith, regard to duty, &c. So Satan may be permitted to act against them for their trial ; and sure he will be the more eager, the more important the duty is, *1 Cor. xvi. 9*. *1 Thess. ii. 18*.

3^{dly}, Believing, that there is no safety in one's leaving the road

road of duty, meet with what they will in it. Hence says the wise man, *Prov. x. 9. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways, shall be known.* A rebuke in the way of duty is sweeter than a warm sunshine in the way of sin: *Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Heb. xi. 26.* There is communion with God to be had in such providences, and they furnish men with useful experiences for their after life.

2. When the affliction is extraordinary, and unusual, so that it draws the eyes of beholders to notice it particularly. When people's afflictions are no more than what is very ordinary and usual, they are the more easily borne; but when God seems to point out one to others, by some unordinary stroke, how hard is that to bear, how hard to keep off concluding that God has a particular hatred against us? There is need to fight in faith here,

1st, Believing, that it has been often the lot of God's children, and particularly of his darling children whom he loved most, to meet with such kind of trials as would seem to have imported a particular hatred of them. Hence says the Apostle, *Heb. x. 33. Ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions.* And again, *1 Cor. iv. 9. I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.* This was the lot of Christ himself, *Psal. xxii. 6. I am a worm, and no man, (says he); a reproach of men, and despised of the people.* How was Job's heart pierced with that question, *Job v. 1. Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?* It is very rare, I suppose, that any of God's children have something more than ordinary about them to the advantage, but they get something more than ordinary to try them. Of all the patriarchs there was not one that had more divine manifestations or so many as *Jacob*, nor so many and great afflictions neither. Of all the sons of *Jacob*, there was none so high raised and useful as *Joseph*, and none so afflicted. *Heman* was a man of a more than ordinary reach, *1 Kings iv. 31.* and so of afflictions, *Psal. lxxxviii. 15. I am afflicted (says he) and ready to die, from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* *Moses* was the meekest man in the earth, and never mere man had more ado with it; *Job* was the mirror of patience, and none suffered more.

2dly,

2dly, Believing the illimited power of sovereignty, which requires absolute resignation: *Matth. xx. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* It is a silencing query, *Rom. ix. 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* Sovereignty takes one piece of clay, and sets it on a throne; another of the same, and sets it on a dunghill in rags and sores; reaches to some the ordinary meal of affliction, but makes another's mess five times as much. And who will set bounds to the disposals of sovereignty?

3dly, Believing, that these different aspects of providence upon men, are but for a time, for the time of trial: and they will soon be at an end: *Job xxi. 23.—26. One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* It is no great matter whether one be the king or the fool on the stage; for in a little they get behind the curtains, and each one appears as really he is. Ordinary and unordinary afflictions will shortly have an end; and they that bear their own part right, happy will they be.

3. When the affliction is of long continuance. Some afflictions are like a summer-shower, heavy in their time, but soon over, and it grows fair again: but the most trying are the continuing afflictions, that are like a stormy winter, that blows hard day after day. Many times deliverance is looked for, but it comes not. Any promising signs that appear at any time do misgive: and the storm is renewed, and grows ever the longer the more hopeless. Here is a sore shock to abide, which requires to fight in faith,

1st, Believing, that this is a part of the discipline of God's house, whereby he exercises his own children. Hence says the prophet, *Jer. viii. 20. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. David complains, Psal. lxix. 3. of his being weary of his crying, of his throat's being dried; of his eyes failing while he waited for his God.* The church was so long continued in affliction, that she forgot prosperity, *Lam. iii. 17. Many of the Lord's people have been kept so long under the hatches, that they have hung up their harps on the willows, so as to have no more use for them; and yet have been delivered.*

2dly,

2dly, Believing, that the longest and blackest night will have a morning; and that though the affliction continue long, it will not continue always. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. ciii. 9. The Lord will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.* If the question be, *Watchman, what of the night?* watchman, *what of the night?* *Is. xxi. 11.* the answer is, *vers. 12. The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.* The sky that has long loured, may clear ere night: the wound may be looked on as incurable, that yet will be fairly healed, *Jer. xv. 18. 20.* And if it should not be removed in time, yet the faith of a blessed eternity may keep up the heart, when God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away, *Rev. xxi. 4.*

3dly, Believing, that God knows the fittest season for removing the affliction, and not we. Hence said our Lord to his brethren, in another case, *John vii. 6. My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.* He keeps times and seasons in his own hand, and at the fit time he will remove it, *Hab. ii. 3.* but not before, if it is to be removed in mercy. Mens hearts must abide much hewing, and God may have much ado with an affliction that is not soon done. The affliction is too soon over, that is removed ere the design of it be answered, *Psal. x. 17.* None blames the husbandman, that he sows not his seed, before the ground be fit to receive it.

Lastly, Believing, that the more we are resigned to the Lord as to the time and method of deliverance, the nearer we are to it, the fairer we lie for it. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. x. 17. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.* Man's extremity is God's opportunity, *Deut. xxxii. 36.* Witness Abraham on the mount, the disciples at sea, the Israelites at the Red sea. Happy should they be, who leaving the deliverance on the Lord, should make it their main care to answer the calls of providence by the affliction while it is continued.

FIRSTLY, There is a fight of faith with this present evil world. Hence says the Apostle, *1 John v. 4. 5. Whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Je-*
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Jesus is the Son of God? This present evil world is a party opposite to God and Christ, and on the devil's side: inasmuch that he that lives in friendship with it, lives at enmity with God, *James iv. 4.* And therefore we must either fight against it, or be ruined by it. And there are these two particulars in the world, that we must fight the fight of faith against: 1. The things, 2. The men of the world.

1st, The things of the world are dangerous enemies to our souls, because of the corruption of our hearts. Hence says the Apostle, *1 John ii. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* O the fearful havock of souls that is made thereby! By them many saints have been cast down, wounded, and many sinners have been slain thereby. The things of the world set out three bands against us, whom we must either fight and overcome by faith, or be ruined by.

1. The white band of the world's smiles.
2. The black band of the world's frowns.
3. The mixed band of the world's cares.

First, The things of the world set out the white band of the world's smiles. And they are stained with the blood of many souls: *Prov. i. 32. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* The smiling world does with the sons of men, as the panther is said to do with other beasts. He draws them after him with the sweet smell of his breath, hiding his head, and afterwards devours them. Thus was *Demas* ruined. The white band fight against souls with two kinds of weapons.

1. Profits of the world. Thus it set upon poor *Judas* with thirty pieces of silver, and so knocked him down, and slew him. It set on *Moses* with the treasures of *Egypt*, and had done so to him, had he not had faith to resist it, *Heb. xi. 26.* The Psalmist observes the snare in these, and therefore gives the watchword, *Psal. lxii. 10. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* And many a man, who has stood his ground against the black band of the world's frowns, has been overcome with the white, like the man in the fable with the sun and the wind.

2. Pleasures of the world. There are three kinds of them; *the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,* *1 John ii. 16.* These are the filken cords, with

with which souls are drawn to destruction ; wherewith when once men come to be bound, they are found like iron fetters ; the breaking of which, if ever they be broken at all, will cost a flood of tears. Hence prays the penitent Psalmist, *Psal. li. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness ; that the bones which thou hast broken, may rejoice.* With many they end in a judicial upgiving to vile affections, *Rom. i. 26.*

These weapons are wielded two ways.

(1.) In expectation. It is the natural desire of all men, *Who will shew us any good ? Psal. iv. 6.* The world steps in and makes such an offer, as Satan did to Christ ; who when he had taken him up into an exceeding high mountain, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, said unto him, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me, Matth. iv. 8. 9.* And when once the hope and expectation of its profits and pleasures is greedily embraced by an inordinate affection, the soul is set on fire therewith, and the poor creature runs to its own ruin on its own feet, *Prov. vii. 22. 23.* And so it fares with many in this case ; as with the mouse, who, watching for the gaping oyster, thrusts in her head presently when the shell opens ; which being immediately closed again, she is crushed. Hence says the Apostle, *1 Tim. vi. 9. They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

(2.) In fruition or enjoyment, *Luke xviii. 24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God !* Such is the corruption of the heart in man, that it is ten to one if the smiling world draw not his heart away from God. Men are apt to love the world inordinately, even when it gives them gall to drink : how hard must it be not to be overcome with it, when it courts men, and lays itself in their bosom ! *Deut. xxxii. 15. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked : thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness ; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*

Ye must fight against the smiling world by faith, if ever ye would have the smiles of the Lord's countenance,

1st, Believing the danger that is in the world's smiles, to your immortal souls. The danger is in the soul's being thereby drawn to sin against God, and so in end to be pierced with sorrows. *Agur* saw this, and believed it ; and

therefore prays thus, *Prov. xxx. 8. 9. Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?—*

The smiling world is apt to betray men into pride, and a high conceit of themselves, forgetting of God, contempt of God's laws, giving up themselves to the swing of their corrupt lusts and affections, &c.; and so to work the ruin of the soul, *Eccl. v. 13.* Believe this on the testimony of God, and so shall ye watch against it.

2dly, Believing the vanity, emptiness, and insufficiency, that is in the world, and all the smiles thereof: *Psal. cxix. 96. I have seen an end of all perfection, (says the Psalmist); but thy commandment is exceeding broad. Eccl. i. 2. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* What do they avail to a man's real worth? what can they contribute to one's eternal happiness? They are uncertain, and may quickly leave us, and will certainly leave us at length; we must go as we came, naked, *Prov. xxiii. 5.* They are insufficient, they cannot give ease to the heart of man; one dead fly may spoil all the pot of ointment, as in *Haman* and *Ahab's* case. They cannot satisfy the soul; witness the disappointment which the rich man met with, spoke of *Luke xii. 16. &c.*

3dly, Believing the transcendent profit and pleasure, that is to be had in the favour of God, the smiles of his countenance, communion and fellowship with him through Jesus Christ. This believe; and believe, that ye may have it, yea, that ye shall have it, seeking it through Christ: and ye shall overcome the smiling world. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. iv. 6. 7. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* Being thus by faith lifted up in your affections to heaven, the earth, and all that is in it, will appear very little in your eyes, *Matth. xiii. 45. 46. Philip. iii. 8.* It is unbelief of, and blindness to the things of a better world, that makes the present evil world so bulky with men.

4thly, Believing the sufficiency of his grace to carry you above them: *2 Cor. xii. 9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* There is strength in the Mediator, for mens overcoming the world: believe the promise with application to yourselves, and ye shall be more than conquerors. The promise

promise brings salvation with it ; and the faith of it loosed *Zaccheus's* heart from the world, *Luke xix. 8.*

Secondly, The things of the world set out the black band of the world's frowns. The world oft-times brings up a train of crosses against men, to drive them away from God. Hence we read of the apostles *confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,* *Acts xiv. 22.* Men must lay their accounts with their ilk days crosses : and sometimes all goes wrong together with them ; their sun goes down at noon-day, as in *Job's* case. Crosses in worldly things do often much mischief to the soul ; they will irritate their corruptions, discompose them for duty to God, and lead them aside into manifold temptations, *Prov. xxx. 9.*

Some have a fighting life with the world all their days : but, alas ! it is not the fight of faith with it, but a sinful faithless fighting with it, that carries on the ruin of their souls. Ye will know this faithless fight with it by these two things.

1. All their fight is to get something of the world, not to be kept from the spiritual evil of the world. The world does not prosper with them, as it does with some others : and all their concern is to make a shift for throughbearing, which swallows up all other concerns with them. So they are such sons of earth, as that they live as if the curse of the serpent were lying on them, all their days to go on their belly, and lick the dust. The world flies from them ; and yet they court it above all things. God crosses them in it, to bring their hearts off it ; but over the belly of all the rebukes of providence, it is their great pursuit, *Jer. v. 3, 4.*

2. Their fight they have with the world, takes away from them all labour of the word of God, and of religion. A sad instance of this ye have, *Exod. vi. 9.* where, when *Moses* had spoken to the children of *Israel* all the promises commanded him of God, mentioned in the preceding verses, it is said, *But they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.* The fight of faith with the world makes the gospel savoury to men : but this carnal fight with it makes it sapless and tasteless ; it rankles their spirits with respect to religion, that many such are not far from thinking that religion is for the wealthier sort ; but that as for them, they have another thing ado. And

thus the frowning world ruins soul and body to them ; at once ruins them for time and eternity.

I would advise you to another sort of fighting with the frowning world. Fight in faith against it,

1st, Believing, that the ordering of your lot is in the hand of a holy wise God, who knows best what lot is for you, *Job i. 21.* whether prosperous or cross. The faith of this would make you embrace the world's frowns, and welcome crosses in the world, as well as prosperity, as what God sees meet for you ; as did *Job, chap. i. 21.* who said, *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

2^{dly}, Believing, that the world's frowns, and smiles too, are but empty and passing shews, which will be soon buried in everlasting forgetfulness. As the world's smiles appear more pleasant than indeed they are, so its frowns appear more terrible to the carnal heart, than they are really : *Eccl. i. 2. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* The one and the other are like the foam on the water, appearing big, but soon pass away. Being seen by the eye of sense, O how weighty are they ! But look to them with an eye of faith, and ye will see they are all but empty noise, which will quickly be laid, *2 Cor. iv. 17.* The longest term of their continuance is but a few years at most. When one comes to the grave, the rich and poor are alike there ; the black band and the white band are both disbanded there.

3^{dly}, Believing, that ye have greater things to be taken up about, than either the world's smiles or frowns. Hence says the Psalmist, *Psal. iv. 6. 7. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.* The one cannot make you happy, nor the other miserable. But the favour of God and his wrath are matters of weight ; let it be your care to obtain the one, and escape the other. These things are eternal, the other but temporal ; O slight not then the substance, with your concern for the shadow : *Matth. xvi. 26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?*

4^{thly}, Believing, that you are in yourselves unworthy of the least smile of common providence. Hence says *Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,*

cies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant : for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. And says the church, Lam. iii. 22. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. O why do crosses in the world go so deep with men, but because of the want of due humiliation ? and whence is that want, but from unbelief ? The humble soul fighting with the world will surely be victorious, because however it frowns on him, he takes it kindly out of the hand of the Lord, as not worthy of better.

5thly, Believing, that your souls are in hazard by the frowning world, as well as the souls of others by the fawning world. Hence is that prayer of Agur's, Prov. xxx. 8. 9. Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me :—lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain. The devil holds some fast in the iron chains of worldly adversity, as well as he does others in the golden chains of prosperity. Some ignorantly think, that because they are poor in the world, and their lot very hard, they will surely be well in another world. O deceive not yourselves. As God has no regard to mens riches in saving them, he has as little regard to their poverty : but be they poor or rich, if they be not in Christ, new creatures, really godly, they will be ruined for ever, John iii. 3. Exod. xxiii. 3.

6thly, Believing the great promise of the gospel with application to yourselves, Heb. viii. 10. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ;—I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. Hos. ii. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. Your crosses in the world may well be taken by you for an alarm, saying, Depart, here is not your rest. God is setting fire to the nests you would build to yourselves among the things of the world ; and withal holding out to you the great promise of the gospel. O embrace it, and trust him in it, Zeph. iii. 12. And thus shall ye defeat the frowning world effectually. Believing God to be your God in Christ, ye will be very easy whether the world smile or frown, Hab. iii. 17.

Lastly, Believing, that, through the grace of Christ Jesus, even the frowns of the world shall be turned to your good :

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Rom. viii. 28. We know, (says the Apostle), that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. How often has honey been gotten out of the carcase of the lion, and much good found to grow within a thorn-hedge of afflictions? The cross has brought forth much good fruit in them that have been exercised thereby : and God is kind to you indeed, if you take it so, in that he makes the world so strange to you, that ye may the more seek after acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, The things of the world set out the mixed band of the world's cares. There is none will be free of attacks from these : even a crown is lined with cares. Yea, we must needs care ; our daily bread will not drop down into our mouths, nor will our necessary business be managed without thought. But men are in danger by lawful things, and not by unlawful only. And the cares of the world are often ruining unto the soul. They are apt to put the man on a rack, to stretch out one's mind as on tenter-pins, degenerating into a faithless anxiety, *Matth. vi. 25. Take no thought ;* in the Greek it is, *Be not racked in your soul ;* to trouble one so as to unfit him for his duty to God, *Luke x. 41. ;* to swallow up all other concerns, and to render the Lord's word, the food of the soul, quite unprofitable, *Matth. xiii. 22.* Fight in faith against them,

1st, Believing, that the success of your affairs depends on the blessing of God on your endeavours, not on your anxious care about them : *Psal. cxxvii. 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* The vanity and uselessness of our anxiety, may be very plainly read in many experiments : *Matth. vi. 27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ?* In Providence's management of the world, how often is it seen that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all, *Eccl. ix. 11. ;* and that by strength no man shall prevail? How often does some unforeseen event render a hopeful and promising project vain? and, on the other hand, set right again what seemed to be quite marred?

2dly, Believing, that the best way to secure what is truly necessary and fit for you in this world, is to be first and mainly taken up about the things of another life. Hence says

says our Lord, *Matth. vi. 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* They that are careful how to please God, God will see to them that they be provided, *Psal. xxxiv. 10.* They whose main care is for the eternal welfare of their souls, may expect, that, in the use of means, the temporal welfare of their bodies shall be seen to by Heaven. This is the shortest and surest way to prosper, *Psal. i. 3.*

3dly, Trusting the Lord with all your concerns which require your care, depending on him as the sovereign manager, and as a sure and safe manager for you. Hence is that exhortation, *Psal. xxxvii. 3. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* And ye should trust him both as to your own conduct and success, both for direction and prospering: *Prov. iii. 5. 6. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* This implies three things.

(1.) Laying your burden of care over on the Lord himself, believing that he will care for you, *1 Pet. v. 7.* Many an unbelieving lift we take of our own burden, and then we complain that we are not able to go under it: but Jesus Christ is appointed to be the great burden-bearer for poor sinners, and they are called to cast their burdens on him, *Psal. lv. 22. and xxxvii. 5.* If they will needs take their burdens, and keep them on their own shoulders, who can help it? But faith's work is to trust him with all.

(2.) Believing, that he will do the best: *Psal. lxxxv. 12. The Lord shall give that which is good. xxxiv. 10. They that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.* He knows himself what is best for us, we know it not: and we owe to him a faith so far implicit, as to believe whatever God doth is best done; and whatever way he leads us, that it is best for us to follow, as did *Abraham, Heb. xi. 8.* It is the property of faith, thus to resign all to the Lord, trusting, that whatsoever is truly best for us, he will bring it about.

(3.) Staying yourself upon the word of the promise, *Gen. xxxii. 12. I will surely do thee good.* Thus faith is to be an anchor of the soul in doubtful events. While anxious care leaves a person nothing to fix on, but causeth him to waver like meteors in the air; faith fixeth on the promise of God, and renders the soul easy, come what will come, *Luke xii. 29. 1 Sam. i. 18.*

2DLY, The men of the world are dangerous enemies also. There is an old enmity, which will not cease to work in them, *Gen. iii. 15*. They are agents for the devil, factors for hell, soldiers in pay to fight Satan's battles. No man will get to heaven without a struggle with them ; for they are opposite parties to all that really mind to be there. We find *David* very concerned to be delivered from them, *Psal. xvii. 13-14*. *Deliver my soul (says he) from the wicked, which is thy sword : from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure*. We likewise find the Apostle *Paul* was so concerned, *2 Thess. iii. 1, 2*. Finally, brethren, (says he), pray for us,—that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men. And our Lord forewarns his disciples of the world's hatred, *John xv. 19*. *If ye were of the world, (says he), the world would love his own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*. Now, the men of the world manage the battle three ways, viz. (1.) with the tongue, (2.) with their feet, (3.) with their hands ; and ye must resist them still one way, viz. in faith.

I. The men of the world fight against the children of God with the tongue. They are the seed of the serpent ; and therefore it is no wonder to see them spit their venom against such as go not their way. Hence we read of their imagining mischiefs in their heart ; of their being continually gathered together for war ; of their having sharpened their tongues like a serpent ; of adders poison being under their lips, *Psal. cxl. 2-3*. *Ishmael's* mocking *Isaac*, *Gen. xxi. 9*. is called persecution, *Gal. iv. 29*. The trial of the believing *Hebrews* was the reproaches of ungodly men, *Heb. x. 32-33*. See what a conspiracy was formed against *Jeremiah*, *Jer. xviii. 18*. *Come, said they, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah : for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet : come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words*. See likewise what a secret consultation was formed against *David*, intimated in that prayer of his, *Psal. lxiv. 2-3*. *Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked ; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity : who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words*. God's people are to fight in faith in this case,

1st, Believing, that our God is able to blunt the edge of their swords, and the points of their arrows, and will do it so far as he sees meet. Hence is that promise, *Job v. 21. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue.* It is in the power of their hand to sling dirt upon the faces of God's children; but it is not in their power to cause it to stick, unless the Lord has said it for the greater trial of his people. God has the hearts of all men in his hands, and his people may confidently trust him with the preserving of their reputation while they keep his way.

2^{dly}, Believing, that all the dirt a mischievous world flings in the face of the Lord's people, the day will come that God will wipe it cleanly away from off them, and throw it back on the faces of them that cast it: *Is. li. 7. 8. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.* A lying tongue is but for a moment, and will rebound upon them that use such a hellish weapon. God has secured by promise the taking away of reproaches from off his people: *Psal. xxxvii. 6. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day. lxviii. 13. Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* And so, in the faith of the promise, they may be very easy; and considering the use God may have for them for their good, may find soul-refreshment in them. Hence says our Lord, *Matth. v. 11. 12. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* And says the Apostle, *2 Cor. xii. 10. I take pleasure—in reproaches,—in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.*

2. The men of the world fight against the children of God with their feet; that is, by the example of their unholy lives. And much mischief they do by that means; hereby heaps are made to lie upon heaps. Hence says our Lord, *Matth. xviii. 7. Woe unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.* It is hard to bear

up against the course of the world lying in wickedness, to swim against that stream, considering the corruption of nature that is in the best. By the force of ill examples, many good men have been worsted, many that had not the root of the matter in them have been ruined: *Matth. xxiv. 12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* Fight against it in faith,

1st, Believing, that the way of the world is the way to eternal ruin: *Eph. ii. 2. Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Prov. xiii. 20. A companion of fools shall be destroyed.* Are we not expressly told, that the multitude is going in the way to destruction? and that there be very few which are on the way to heaven? *Matth. vii.* So that whosoever mind for heaven, must needs be nonconformists to the world, though thereby they become the world's wonder, like *Joshua* and his fellows. See *1 Pet. iv. 4.*

2^{dly}, Believing, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, ye shall be enabled to stand the shock of the corrupt example of the world. The eye of faith will discern the greater strength to be on the side of the wrestler against ill example. Hence said *Elisha*, in another case, to his servant, *2 Kings vi. 16. Fear not: for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.* And says the Apostle, *1 John iv. 4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. If God be for us, who can be against us?* And for us he will be, if we trust him for our upbearing against it. He *strengthens the spoiled against the strong*; and be the force of the current never so great, they can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth them, *Philip. iv. 13.*

3. The men of the world fight against the children of God with their hands. There is never a wicked man in the world, but, by his natural make and frame, is a persecutor, *Gen. iii. 15.* And none is fit to travel the road to heaven, but they that are resolute to hold on their way, notwithstanding all the mischief a wicked world may do them. Hence says our Lord, *Luke xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Sometimes indeed God binds their hands,

hands; that they can do nothing with them against his people; but the mischievous persecuting nature never leaves the serpent's seed: and according as holy providence looseth the cord, so will they vent it. But resist in faith,

1st, Believing, that it is little they can do, when they do their worst. Hence says our Lord, *Luke xii. 4. 5. Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that; have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.* The utmost reach of the most malicious and powerful persecutors, is but to the body, and things that concern time. And what is the body in comparison of the soul? time-things, in comparison of those which are eternal? The faith of this carried up the martyrs, and armed them with a holy contempt of the impotent rage of their persecutors.

2^{dly}, Believing, that they are ever under the check and controul of a gracious God, engaged on the side of those that keep his way: *Psal. lxxvi. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* So that he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, *Prov. x. 9.* How spitefully did *Laban* pursue *Jacob*, and *Saul*, *David*? but God put a check on them. Faith will discover in this case an almighty power for protection, and man to be but a worm, a fading thing which shall be like grass, *Jf. li. 12.*

3^{dly}, Believing the eternal rest, peace, and safety, that remains for the people of God: *2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.* It is but a short time we are to remain among the inhabitants of this world: the firm faith of that, with the faith of a better life, would make us very easy whether we have their smiles or frowns. Our great concern is to fight our way to the better world, and resolutely to cleave to the Lord and the way of duty, over the belly both of the things and men of the world.

SIXTHLY, There is a fight of faith with sin: *Heb. xii. 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* Of all things, there is nothing so opposite to God as sin is. The devil brought it into the world at first: and fearful havoc has it made therein, ever since its entrance; destroy-

ing the most part of *Adam's* children, wounding and doing mischief to all. And none can reach heaven, but those who both fight it, and overcome it : and there is no successful fighting against it, but in faith. And that ye may know what you have to fight against here,

1. There is the captain of this hellish band ; that is, the sin of our nature.

2. There is a swarm of hellish lusts, as soldiers under the command of the sin of our nature.

First, There is the captain of this hellish band ; that is, the sin of our nature, called *the old man*, *the flesh*, and *sin* by way of eminence, *Rom. vi. 12*. Sin is woven into our very natures ; our nature has got a wrong set by *Adam's* fall. It is averse to good, and prone to evil ; the bias of it lies quite the wrong way. This corrupt disposition is most active, and by its indwelling and activity fights against the soul. And it exerts itself against the soul especially these three ways.

1. With its guilt, whereby it binds over the soul to the anger of God ; the soul out of Christ to his revenging wrath, and even the believing soul to fatherly anger and displeasure, *Gal. iii. 10. Psal. lxxxix. 30. &c.* The conscience feeling this band of sin on it, is frightened and fired. The man sees himself, by reason of the corruption and pollution of his nature, an object of God's indignation, liable to the fearful strokes of his hand : even as a serpent, or any other poisonous creature, is liable to the stroke of a man's hand where-ever he meets with it. Now, if ever ye would break these bonds of guilt, fight against them in faith,

1st, Believing, that the Lord Jesus Christ has made a complete satisfaction to the justice of God, not only for actual sins, but even for the sin of our nature, *Rom. vi. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.* In respect of the sin of our nature we needed a Saviour ; and it was reckoned to him, to be cleared by him, as well as our actual transgressions. So that there is a sufficient remedy provided against the guilt of the sin of our nature, in Jesus Christ ; so that no man needs to despond in that case as hopeless.

2^{dly}, Believing, embracing, and trusting to the promise of remission of sin through the blood of Christ : *Eph. i. 7. In him we have redemption through his blood ; the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* While the conscience is fired with guilt, faith must discern the promise

of remission through Christ, held forth in the gospel, like a rope to drowning men, *Luke xxiv. 47.* And faith must embrace that promise, relying on it as the Lord's own promise; even as the drowning man ventures his life on the rope let down to him: and so shall that guilt be removed, and the conscience purged, *Acts xiii. 38. 39. Rom. iii. 24. 25.* Your warrant is, *Acts xiii. 38. Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.*

3dly, Believing, and applying to yourselves, and pleading the perfect holiness of Christ's birth and nature, as a public person, *Col. ii. 10. 11.* Thus faith may triumph over the sin of one's nature, as to the guilt of it. While the law says, Thou hast an unholy nature, and therefore must die the death: Yea, may the soul say, True, my nature is unholy in me; but Christ has satisfied for that guilt; and I have a holy nature in Christ, in him as a public person I was born holy, and retain the holiness of nature: and therefore I must not die, but live.

Object. But, alas! I dare not apply Christ's perfect holiness to me, for I fear I have not right to it. *Ans.* There is a twofold right. (1.) To a thing. (2.) In it. What right has a beggar to a penny which a man seriously holds out to him, saying, Ha! there is a penny? He certainly has a right to that penny; he may lawfully take it out of that man's hand, and put it in his pocket. Such a right every one of you has to Christ's righteousness, whereof this is a part. It is God's gift to you, *Rom. v. 17. John vi. 32.*; held out to you to be received and applied by faith, *Rom. i. 17.* If the beggar neglect or refuse it, though he had a right to it, he is justly deprived of it; and the man may put it in his own pocket again: but if he do take it, then he has a right in it; it is his own in possession, and cannot be taken from him again. Go then, and take the gift of righteousness out of Christ's hand, verily believing that ye have a right to it.

2. With its motions and activity, *Rom. vii. 5.* It is an active principle, still tending to corrupt the soul more, fighting for the throne in the heart, and to cause the soul obey it, in fulfilling its lusts. And it must be fought against, to the breaking of its designs, *Rom. vi. 12.* It is a restless enemy, present at all times with a man, and especially active at some times, and particularly when one would do good; as it was with *Paul*, *Rom. vii. 21.* It is like a dunghill, still sending forth its filthy steams. And as it strives to strengthen

strengthen itself, and to have the throne ; so the Christian must fight against it, to bear it down, weaken, and get it mortified, *Gal. v. 17.* And ye must for this cause fight in faith against it,

1st, Believing, that it is your most dangerous enemy ; for so it is indeed. Never did *Paul* cry out to be delivered from the most bloody men that were set against him, as from indwelling sin, *Rom. vii. 24.* *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !* It is a domestic enemy ; an enemy within, more dangerous than all the enemies we have without, whether devils or the present evil world. Were it not for it, they would have a cold coal to blow at. But this furnishes them with notable advantages against us.

2^{dly}, Believing Christ to be the great ordinance of God for sanctification, and looking for your sanctification from him, on the credit of the promise held out in the gospel to you, *Is. xlv. 22.* *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else.* Men have by nature's light been convinced of the necessity of sanctification ; and some have thought one means proper to obtain it, and others another. *Pagans* have thought washings with water, sacrifices, the study of moral virtue, proper means for it. The *Jews* have added to these, the observation of *Moses's* law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The *Papists* have thought a multitude of uninstituted ceremonies, fastings, whippings, &c. with the work itself in sacraments, all proper to sanctify the unholy. Legalists look on their own faithless endeavours after holiness, their watchings, &c. as proper means to obtain it. But all in vain.

But God has appointed his own Son to be the great ordinance for sanctification of the unholy, that the praise of our sanctification may be his own, as well as of our justification, *1 Cor. i. 30. 31.* And he has lodged the fulness of the Spirit of holiness in him, to be partaked of in the way of believing, *Acts xxvi. 18.* Look how the stung *Israelites* were cured in the wilderness by looking to the brazen serpent, believing that by that means they should be healed ; so is an unholy sinner made holy, looking unto Jesus, trusting to him for their sanctification, *John iii. 14. 15.* or as the woman with the bloody issue. Hence the church, believing the promise of sanctification, says, *Micah vii. 19.* *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us : he will subdue*

subdue our iniquities : and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

3dly, Struggling against it in the faith of its having got its death's wounds, in the death and resurrection of Christ, as a public person, *Rom. vi. 6.—9.* No wonder they be still under the power of indwelling sin, who struggle against it without an eye to the death of Christ. But the soul by faith eying the death and resurrection of Christ, as the death of sin, will thereby be animated to act against it, like a giant refreshed with wine. The sins of all that are Christ's were imputed to him, and he by his sufferings expiated the guilt of them ; and so he rose again free of that imputed guilt : so, in virtue of his death and resurrection, it loses its power over those that are his. And by the faith of it, we become partakers of it.

4thly, Believing, that we shall get the victory over it through Jesus Christ, *Rom. vii. 24. 25.* *O wretched man that I am, (says Paul) ; who shall deliver me from the body of this death ! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* They will fight well who are sure of the victory : and it is faith's work to believe the victory over sin, according to the promise, *Rom. xvi. 20.* *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.* This was included in the first promise, *Gen. iii. 15.* *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent ;* which was proposed to our first parents to be by them believed.

3. With its sticking still close to the soul, *Rom. vii. 17.* It cleaves to us, like a stain that cannot be got fully washed off, while we are in this world. It is like the fretting leprosy in the walls of the house, not to be quite removed, till the house be pulled down. Notwithstanding all the struggles against it, it cannot be got to the door till death. Fight in faith against it,

1st, Making no truce with it, but ever seeking its ruin, in the faith of Christ's excellency, and sin's hatefulness. The eye of faith fixing on the glory of Christ held forth in the gospel, has a transforming virtue. Hence says the Apostle, *2 Cor. iii. 18.* *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* And thus the heart is separated from sin, and set against it, while yet sin still cleaves to the soul. Like the house of David and the house of Saul : no league between them, but

but the war continued till the house of *Saul* was quite sunk.

2dly, Believing, that the victory over it will be at length full and complete. Resist it in the faith of this. However it appears to be fixed with bands of iron and brass, yet the breaking thereof shall come suddenly, at an instant. As the walls of *Jericho* fell down on the seventh day, that were not moved while the *Israelites* compassed them the six days : so at death these walls will fall down, and be rased to the foundation.

Secondly, There is a swarm of hellish lusts as soldiers under the command of the sin of our nature, *Rom. vi. 12.* These are the members of the old man, the streams flowing from the bitter fountain of the corruption of nature. These war against the soul, *1 Pet. ii. 11.* They seek to drive the soul from God, they push on men to satisfy them with forbidden fruit, and at length drown the soul in destruction and perdition, where they get the final victory, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* Against these also ye must fight in faith, resist them, deny them, weaken, mortify, and crucify them.

It is a difficult fight ; but faith will help you out in it, as difficult as it is.

1. Their name may be *legion*, because they are many, *Tit. iii. 3.* All sin is radically in the corrupt nature of man : and there is never a temptation in the world, but there is in our nature some lust or other akin to it. Look through the world, and see all the abominations which any where appear there ; some are atheists, adulterers, &c. But the corrupt affections are in every body's heart naturally, *Prov. xxvii. 19.* As in water face answereth to face ; so the heart of man to man. But resist ye, believing, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, the victory is to be got over them all, *Psal. cxviii. 12.* There is neither strength nor multitude to be feared, where one by faith can oppose to both, the almighty power engaged on the side of the wrestlers against sin. Therefore says the Apostle, *2 Tim. ii. 1.* Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The blood of Christ is of infinite value, the Spirit of Christ of infinite efficacy, and faith must rely on these.

2. Their allies are all the powers of hell ; Satan, *John viii. 44.* the world, *Tit. ii. 12.* All the snares and temptations that are in the world, are allied to some lust of the heart, which answers to them as tinder to fire. But ye should resist, believing that greater is he that is in you, than he that

is in that combat, 1 *John* iv. 4. Oppose to these by faith the divine attributes, his power, wisdom, &c. the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower, &c.

3. Their lodging is not far off. It is the corrupt heart; thence it is that they issue out against us, *Mark* vii. 21. The heart of man is like a common inn, often so thronged with strangers, that there is no room for the entertainment of the master. But ye must resist them notwithstanding, believing that your helper is as near you as those your enemies, 1 *John* iv. 4. O it is a trying consideration to a gracious soul to think, that sin is woven into one's very nature, mixed with one's very constitution. But let faith discern the union betwixt Christ and the soul; let the Christian believe that Christ dwells in him by his Spirit, in an indissoluble union; so may he see how to get clear of sin at length.

4. Their qualities are very bad. They are the brats of *Babel*, the offspring of hell. And,

1st, They are greedy and insatiable lusts, *Gal.* v. 17. They are like the grave and the barren womb, that never say, *It is enough*. Where they are indulged, and yielded to, they fill the man's hands continually, seeking meat for them, to the provoking of God, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18. *James* iv. 3. And the more they are gratified and fed, the more they still crave: so that they are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, *II.* lvii. 20.

But ye must resist them, if ye mind for heaven. Ye must deny their cravings, *Tit.* ii. 12. Make no provision for them, but starve them, however painful that may be, *Rom.* xiii. 14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. This is the way to rid yourselves of their trouble: for mens lusts are like fire, that will die out if there be no fuel laid to it. And if ye would do this, ye must do it,

(1.) Believing, that there is a fulness in Christ, enough to satisfy the soul, to give the heart a complete rest, that it shall need none of those things which nourish lusts, *Matth.* xiii. 45. 46. The one pearl discovered, stays the pursuit after the many. Hence faith contracts the desires of the soul into one, *Psal.* xxvii. 4. which is the better part. O what is the cause men are so taken up to satisfy their lusts with their proper food, but the not believing of the fulness of Christ? *Psal.* iv. 6. 7.

(2.) Embracing that fulness of Christ for and instead of those

those things your hearts lust after. This is the import of selling all and buying the field, the one pearl ; the soul taking Christ for these things, as in buying one takes the commodity bought instead of all he pays. The surest and shortest way to mortification of lusts is this way of believing, whereby the soul makes a happy exchange ; for and instead of such lusts which cleave to him, embracing Christ, from him to draw that content and satisfaction he sought in the lust. Thus men deal with their hearts, as men with children, giving them one thing to get another from them, *Rom. xiii. 14.* forecited.

(3.) Believing, that you shall find that rest and satisfaction of heart in Christ, which you sought in your lusts. This is the import of the gospel-offer to all, *Matth. xi. 28.* *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* *If. lv. 1.* *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* And if you believe it not, you believe not the gospel aright : and always the less ye believe it, the surer gripe will your heart hold of its lusts. But believe it firmly ; and the more firmly you believe it, the more will ye let go your gripes of your lusts.

2dly, They are hurtful lusts, *1 Tim. vi. 9.* And they extend their hurt to the tenderest part of the man, and to the not only wounding, but ruining of it, if the effect thereof be not stopped, destroying the soul. They hurt as water hurteth, drowning the soul, *ibid.* ; as fire hurteth, burning it up, *Rom. i. 27.* ; as a canker hurteth, eating it away, *2 Tim. ii. 17.* ; as poison hurteth, killing it, *Psal. cxl. 3.* *If. lix. 5.* They extend their hurt not only to the party in whose breast they are lodged, but to others, *Eccl. ix. 18.* *One sinner destroyeth much good.* Sometimes one's lust involves many in guilt, and many in trouble ; like a fire breaking out in a house, burning down the houses nearest it, and putting all into trouble and vexation. Thus *Achan's* lust involved his whole family in guilt, and troubled all *Israel.* *Adam's* lust ruined all the world.

Ye must therefore beware of them, and of the hurt by them. But deceive not yourselves, thinking ye may entertain them, and not be hurt by them ; that ye can take the serpent in your bosom, and not be stung thereby, *Prov. vi. 27. 28.* *Eccl. x. 8.* Resist the beginnings of your lusts, nip them in the bud. The longer they go on, they will be the

the harder to master, like a fire, or a water. If they have got up upon you, by all means endeavour to hinder their spreading; and speedily quench them, if they are spread. To do it to purpose, do it in faith,

(1.) Putting yourselves under the divine protection, by trusting in the shadow of the wings of a God in Christ. This is the work of faith. Hence said Boaz to Ruth, chap. ii. 12. *The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, UNDER WHOSE WINGS THOU ART COME TO TRUST.* This has the promise of protection, *Psal. xci. 1. &c.* Faith sees the hazard the soul is in from hurtful lusts, and therefore disposeth the soul to all due precaution, and to put the soul in the Lord's hand for keeping, as the chickens get in under the wings of the hen, *Psal. xxxi. 5.*

(2.) Applying the Redeemer's blood for purging away the guilt brought on the soul by these lusts, *Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 14.* This is the only way to remove the hurt of them in that case. Thus the hurt of the guilt of them shall be cured, *Mark xvi. 17. 18.* The guilt of them casts the conscience in a fever; but faith applying the blood of Christ held out in the promise of the gospel, obtains pardon of the guilt, and a cool to the sick conscience, *Is. xxxiii. 24.* The access to this blood is free to all, *Zeck. xiii. 1.* *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.* *1 Cor. vi. 11.* *And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

(3.) Trusting to the fulness of the Spirit of sanctification in Christ, for breaking of the power of these lusts, *1 Cor. i. 30.* We are not man enough for the least of these powers of hell: therefore we are to trust to borrowed strength, *2 Tim. ii. 1.* *Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* And going out against them in the name of the Lord, like David with his sling, we shall do valiantly: for he *strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong; so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress,* *Amos v. 9.* Thus many who have long been a prey to their lusts, like dead men lying in the grave to the worms, receiving the Spirit of life from Jesus Christ, have shook them off. For (says the Apostle) *the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death,* *Rom. viii. 2.* And in them has been fulfilled in a spiritual sense,

Jf. xiv. 2. The people shall take them, and bring them to their place : and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids : and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors. And this in virtue of that, Psal. lxxviii. 18. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, &c.

3dly, They are restless lusts ; like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, *Jf. lvii. 20.* They are like the midges in a summer-day, ever in motion, working some annoyance to the soul. For temptations are thick in the world, and they never want something to stir them up. They are warring lusts, they are never at peace, they are ever in the field of battle.

(1.) Warring among themselves, one against another, *Jam. iv. 1.* And the soul of man is what they are warring for, which shall possess it, and be governor of it. In this respect the poor sinner's heart is like a town situated in the confines of the territories of several ambitious princes, which is tossed and harassed amongst them, he fighting to have it, and he fighting to have it ; one turning out another, &c. Thus pride and ambition draw the man one way, covetousness draws him another way : contrary lusts at once fight in him. And there is no peace for the man, but by mortifying both the contending parties.

(2.) They war against the soul, *1 Pet. ii. 11.* All of them are enemies to it, and seek its ruin. Though they be contrary one to another, yet they conspire together for the destruction of the soul ; like *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* against *Christ*. The soul, in respect of its make and constitution, is most allied to heaven, and therefore is the special object of their rage.

Wherefore ye also, if ye mind for heaven, must lay your accounts with a continual warfare. Ye must never let down your watch, nor lay by your armour, but ever stand in a fighting posture, *Eph. vi. 14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, &c.* As there is no peace to be made betwixt contrary lusts, so ye must not side with any of the parties, nor be at peace with either, but maintain the fight against both. And fight in faith,

[1.] Believing, that this war will have a comfortable end at length, and ye shall have a profound, perfect, lasting peace, *2 Tim. iv. 7. 8.* Though the war with your lusts must be a lasting one ; it is good news, that it will not be everlasting ;

everlasting; but the peace obtained through the complete victory will be so. Take courage, O Christian, the last stroke will be given ere long in this battle, which will be the decisive stroke. The day will come, when the enemies *ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever*, *Exod. xiv. 13.* In heaven ye will get eternal peace and rest, *Rev. xxi. 5.* There the centinels are called from their posts, and the men of war lay by their swords, and put on their crowns.

[2.] Believing, that your helper is ever as ready as your enemies, *Psal. xvi. 8.* It is a weighty consideration, that Satan walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and our enemies within are restless. But faith wants not a solid relief to oppose unto this, looking to the promise, *Psal. cxxi. 4.* *Behold, he that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep.* *Is. xxvii. 3.* *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* At what time soever the enemies attack us, we may have access to our help: and the faith of the promise will fetch it in as quickly as by a look, *Is. xlv. 22.* *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*

[3.] Believing, that his grace is ever sufficient for you, *2 Cor. xii. 9.* Though the war last long, the stock of strength cannot be wasted, in which ye must fight; since it is an inexhaustible treasure in Christ Jesus, to which ye can never come amiss, *John i. 16.* Indeed, if ye fight in your own strength, ye will soon find it wasted: but faith's work is to fetch in strength from Christ, and it is sufficient for the continued warfare, *Is. xl. 31.*

Lastly, They are deceitful lusts, *Eph. iv. 22.* We are apt to be beguiled by them, if we take not good heed. They deceive sinners, and then take them captive, *Tit. iii. 3.*; and then slay them, *Rom. vii. 11.* They are the golden cup in Satan's hand, by which he ministers poison to the soul. They are deceitful: for,

(1.) They always promise what they never perform, *2 Pet. ii. 19.* Who is the man that is not disappointed in them, looking for that content and satisfaction he never finds? How was Judas deceived that way?

(2.) They often commend themselves to men under the mask of some harmless thing, or some real virtue, *Col. ii. 18.* Thus, like Satan, they transform themselves into an angel of light. So many call evil good, and good evil, &c.

(3.) There

(3.) There is a hidden mischief in them, when they are most smiling. There is a hook always, which is covered with the bait, *James i. 14. Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* It is a metaphor taken from fishes caught by the bait, and drawn out of the water. But

Ye must have your eyes in your head, and not be ignorant of Satan's devices, *Prov. xxii. 3.* Be not rash, but try ere ye trust. Forbidden fruit may be fair to look at, and the devil's ground may be very smooth; and the sinner see no hazard where death is at his elbow, *Prov. xiv. 12.* Therefore fight as against a deceitful enemy, *Eph. vi. 11.* And fight in faith,

[1.] Believing the testimony of God concerning the heart, *Jer. xvii. 9.* that it is *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* and therefore keeping a watchful eye, a holy jealousy over it: *Prov. xxviii. 14. Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.* Faith is the soul's going out of itself to the Lord, and brings off the man from leaning to his own understanding, *Prov. iii. 5.* and trusting to his own heart, *Prov. xxviii. 26.* For these are the things that betray a man into the hands of deceitful lusts.

[2.] Trusting to the conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ, *Prov. iii. 6.* He is the Captain of salvation, the appointed leader of his people, eyes to them in the wilderness. And he will teach those who are willing to be taught, *Psal. xxv. 9.* And there is no way to get clear of the deceitful lusts, but by shutting our own eyes, and looking to the Lord for light to discern our way. For he is made *wisdom* for us, *1 Cor. i. 30.* and by faith in him, *the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err in the way of holiness, 11. xxxv. 8.*

LASTLY, There is a fight with death. This is the last enemy ye will have to grapple with: *1 Cor. xv. 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.* There was never any who escaped this combat, but *Enoch* and *Elias*. As for all others, the encounter with it is appointed of Heaven, *Heb. ix. 27.* And there is no freeing of any from this battle, *Eccel. viii. 8.* Many trouble not themselves to fight with temptation, or with sin, but live at peace with these their enemies: but, whether they will or not, they must feel the bitterness of death. If ever ye would fight it so as to overcome, ye must fight in faith. Here consider,

1. How death may attack you; and,

2. In

2. In what shapes it may do so.

1st, How death may attack you. And that,

First, With sorrow and heaviness, *Psal. cxvi. 3.* Death is apt to let in a flood of sorrows upon poor sinners: so that those who have spent their days in mirth, find then all their mirth quite swallowed up in that flood; and they who have had a life of sorrows, feel then the flood of them swelling to the brim. And there are two sluices death opens to let in this flood.

1. The separation of the man from this world, and all things in it, *Is. xxxviii. 11.* It comes to carry the man off from this world; to separate betwixt him and his nearest relations; to put an end to any portion of his under the sun, that he shall no more see the sun rise or set again, and have no more access to his own house, bed, or board. This is apt to let in a flood of sorrow upon the man. And there is no way to hold out against it, but one of these two;

1st, By turning it into the matter of joy: like those mentioned in *Job iii. 22.* *which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave;* when the man is so wearied of the world, that his heart leaps for joy, when God's messenger, death, knocks at his door.

2dly, By a Christian resignation to the will of the Lord, *Luke ii. 29.* the man being ready calmly to deliver up into the hands of God, all he has here.

Now, if ye would fight death's sorrows on this head, viz. separation from the world, either of these ways; ye must do it in faith,

(1.) Believing, that, through the alone merits of Christ, ye shall be admitted into a better world, set down in a better house, at a better table, and lie better, even in *Abraham's* bosom, *2 Tim. iv. 7. 8.* Nothing else will work the soul into that Christian resignation. The heart of man will never be truly content to give away this world's good things, while it has no comfortable prospect of better: and therefore Christian resignation at death, will be according to faith's view of better things in the other world, *Heb. xi. 13.*

(2.) Trusting the same Lord Jesus with the charge and care of those whom ye are to leave and are concerned for, *1 Pet. v. 7.* *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* With an eye to this, the Lord has made that promise, *Jer. xlix. 11.* *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.* Ungodly men can have no such comfort, in the abundance they

have

have to leave to theirs, as a godly man may have in this way of believing, *Heb. xi. 22.*

2. The separation of the soul from the body, *Jf. xxxviii. 13. 14.* The soul and body are closely knit ; but death comes to loose the silver cord that knits them together ; like a whirlwind to separate them, and carry them far asunder. The soul has a sure prospect of a separate state, which it has no experience of ; and the consideration thereof is apt to fill it with sorrow, on the account of its foreseen widowhood.

There is no making head against this, but in faith ;

1st, Believing the soul's union with Jesus Christ, and with God through him, *Rom. viii. 38. 39.* Thus the soul has full comfort against the separation that death makes. Though the man's spirit parts with his body, yet the Spirit of God still dwells in the soul. God would have his people believe this particularly ; and for that cause he has appointed the sacraments, signifying and sealing their union with Christ.

2^{dly}, Believing and trusting for the blessed resurrection of the body at God's appointed time, *Job xix. 26.* It stays the sorrow of friends at their parting, that they look to meet again in peace : and when the soul and body are parting, the stronger the faith of the joyful resurrection is, the less will the sorrow be on that head. And all that are Christ's have good ground for it : for our Lord has said, *John xi. 25. I am the resurrection, and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

Secondly, Death may attack you with fear and terror. Death is of all terrors the most terrible. Hence we read of being brought to the king of terrors, *Job xviii. 14.* And therefore the scripture expresseth the greatest consternation by the terrors of death ; as in the case of David, *Psal. lv. 4. The terrors of death are fallen upon me.* And says Job, chap. xxiv. 17. *For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death : if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.* Death will appall and damp the stoutest heart : it will fill them with fear, who have been a terror to others in the land of the living. But faith will bear out, where natural courage falls like a dike of sand before a sweeping flood. Now, there are three sources of the terrors of death.

1. Guilt lying on the soul, *1 Cor. xv. 56. The sting of death is sin.* By the guilt of sin the sinner is bound over to death ; so that is the sting wherewith it pierces men. The
native

native guilt of sin binds over the sinner to death in its full extent, even to revenging wrath : the moderated guilt of it binds over the sinner to unstinged death. When death comes up, it takes the man prisoner as a guilty man ; and so fills him with terror. Here must be a close fight of faith to stop this source of fear and terror.

1st, Over the belly of all your doubts, fears, and felt unworthiness, stretching out the hand of faith, and laying it on the head of the great sacrifice Christ, and so transferring all your guilt on him, *Rom. iii. 25.* and *v. 11.* Ye must believe in, and trust on the obedience and death of Christ, for the removal of your guilt ; believing, that, for the sake of a crucified Christ, all your sins shall be pardoned. And for the warrant of your so trusting, ye must discern the pardon offered to you through Christ in the gospel, *Acts xiii. 38. 39.* ; and so, amidst all your doubts and fears, anchor your souls on the faithfulness of God in the promise. Thus ye shall pull out death's sting, obtaining the removal of guilt by faith in his blood.

2^{dly}, Believing and applying to yourselves Christ's full answering of the demands of the law, whereby the law is disarmed of its curse, and the bond of it as a covenant is loosed from off you, *Gal. ii. 20.* *Col. ii. 14.* Death's strength lies in guilt : take away guilt off the soul, death is like *Samson* without his hair. The strength of guilt lies in the law as a covenant : remove the bond of the law from off the man, and the man's guilt is like the cords the *Philistines* bound *Samson* with, which became as flax burnt with fire, *Judg. xv. 14.* Let faith apply to the soul Christ's obedience and death, and so his fully answering the demands of the law : and then the law can have no more effect on you, than a subscribed bond fully paid and discharged, blotted and rent in pieces, can have on you.

2. The unseen unknown world, therefore called *the land of darkness*, *Job x. 21.* One is apt to be seized with fear, when they are to be carried into a place which they do not know. Death comes to carry us to another world, which we never saw, nor can see till we be there, never to come back : and that makes it terrible. It is the world of spirits : the blessed spirits dwelling in the upper regions ; the damned spirits in the lower. We are so unacquainted with the inhabitants of that world, that the sight of a spirit, good or bad, would be enough to fright us while we are here : what wonder then that death be terrible, coming to carry us,

where there are none but spirits? Here is great necessity of faith, to bear up against the fear rising from thence. We must then stay our hearts by faith,

1st, Firmly believing the scripture-account of the unseen world, *Heb. xi. 1.* Though we have never seen it, yet we have heard of it: though we never were there, yet the map of it has been laid before us in the Bible; and there we have described both the upper and lower part of it. And in that map, drawn by inspired pens, not capable of erring, the lower part of that world is not more dreadful, than the upper part is pleasant and desirable, *John xiv. 2. Rev. xxi.* The faith of heaven is staying to the heart in some measure.

2^{dly}, Firmly believing the scripture-account of the way to heaven; that Christ is the way to it, *John xiv. 6.*; and that by faith we walk in him to it, *Col. ii. 6.* If we believe not this, our hearts have nothing to stay themselves on, but are left at an utter uncertainty, in our encounter with death. Therefore labour to strengthen your faith of this, that it may not be yea and nay, but yea with you, *2 Cor. i. 19. 20.*; that *he that believeth, shall be saved.*

3^{dly}, Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, for your safe passage to the upper part of the unseen world, *Psal. lxxiii. 24. and xxxi. 5.*; committing your soul to him, rolling the weight of your throughbearing on him as the Captain of salvation appointed of God to bring many sons to glory. Take hold of him, by his word of promise, by the everlasting covenant, *2 Sam. xxiii. 5.*; and labour to gripe some particular promise for that end, as *Is. xliii. 2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Heb. xiii. 5. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Is. xxxv. 9. 10. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

4^{thly}, Believing, that your Lord Christ is Lord of the unseen world, and that the whole compass of it above and below is under his dominion, *Rev. i. 18.* It is in his hand that the disposing of souls to any part of that world is. Neither is he to fight with the prince of darkness, on that side, about any soul. That fight of his with Satan was in this world.

world. When one comes there, the devil cannot touch him, till he has given him up to him as an executioner. And he has said it, that none that believe in him shall be damned, *Mark xvi. 16.* Believe it with application.

5thly, Believing, that as soon as your soul departs out of your body, God will receive it into his own hand, *Psal. xxxi. 5.* compared with *Luke xxiii. 46.* So David believed, *Psal. xxiii. 4.* Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. It shall be conducted by angels into Abraham's bosom, *Luke xvi. 22.* Believe, that the same God who brought thee out of the womb, safe into this world, when thou wast a naked helpless infant, and by his providence preserved thee, will take the same care of thee, when entering into the unseen world. This is the comfort of faith in death; agreeably to what the Psalmist saith, *Psal. xxii. 9. 10.* But thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breasts. I wast cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

Lastly, That thy God will fit thee both for the place and the company, however unfit thou art for them now, *Heb. xii. 23.* He will do it in a moment, as appears by parity of reason from *1 Cor. xv. 51. 52.* Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, &c. Believe that he will fit thee, not only for the sight or knowledge of the spirits there before thee, but for communion with them. And thou mayst confirm thy faith of this, by the experience thou hast had (1.) of his fitting thee for communion with the inhabitants of this world, though thou camest into it an infant knowing no body there, no not the mother that bare thee; and (2.) of his fitting thee for communion with himself, though thou wast by nature dead in sin.

3. The judgment, *Heb. ix. 27.* The appearing before a tribunal is an awful thing. When a guilty creature is lying on a death-bed, drawing his last breath, and considers that in a little he is to be carried before his judge in another world, to be judged, and give account of his deeds done in the body, and to receive his sentence for eternity, in well or woe; no wonder fear and terror seize him. There is no making head against this but by faith,

1st, Receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his salvation offered to you in the gospel, *John i. 12.* So

in *Rev.* xxii. 17. the offer of Christ is made, after the warning given of Christ's coming to judgment: for this only is the way how a sinner may stand before him. While a sinner breathes in this world, he is in the way: and that is the time to agree with the adversary. Christ and all his salvation is offered; that is, pardon, peace, right to glory, sanctification, &c. And it is the work of faith to receive them, held forth in the gospel-promise.

For this cause it is necessary to judge ourselves, and condemn ourselves; to call over all our bypast life, with the sin of our nature: and renouncing all confidence in ourselves, to fly to the horns of the altar, confiding in a crucified Christ, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the promise of the gospel: *John* iii. 16. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

2dly, Believing, that the same Jesus who is offered, and whom you have embraced, in the gospel, is the judge whom you are to appear before, *John* v. 22. *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* This is a fit means to abate the terror of the judgment-seat to a believer. For thus, by the eye of faith, the soul may see, that it is the very same person who is its head, husband, advocate, and the redeemer, who is its judge. And thus a full fountain of consolation is opened against the terrors of death, arising from the judgment.

3dly, Believing, that you being in Christ, judgment will not proceed upon you according to the law of works, but according to the law of faith, i. e. the covenant of grace, *Rev.* xx. 12. The law of works adjudgeth every one that sins in the least to die, *Gen.* ii. 17. *Gal.* iii. 10.; and according to it shall all unbelievers be judged; but no believer, *Rom.* vi. 14. The covenant of grace adjudgeth every soul united to Christ by faith, how many soever his sins have been, to live eternally, for the sake of Christ's obedience and death imputed to him, *Rom.* viii. 1. *John* iii. 16.

Lastly, Believing, that the covert of Christ's blood is a perfect covert, within which not one drop of revenging wrath can fall here or hereafter, *Is.* xxxii. 2.; and that faith's plea will never be rejected, for it is established by the covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, and God's faithfulness is impawned for it. Let the believer then, thinking on the tribunal, behold the rainbow about the throne, *Rev.* iv. 3. compared with *Is.* liv. 9. and be comforted against the terror of death from this quarter.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, With despondency, *Lam. iii. 18.* This is the most fearful weapon wherewith death attacks a man; when it goes about to rase a man's hope in Christ, making his heart to sink within him as hopeless, filling him with a fearful expectation of eternal destruction, *Job xxxiii. 22.* This may be the case of those that are strangers to Christ, whom death seizing after a lifetime spent in profanity and wickedness, their sins, especially their gross heaven-daring abominations staring them in the face while they are death's prisoners, are apt to fill them with despair of mercy, *Job xviii. 14.* It may also be the case of saints after a careless untender walk, *Psal. lxxix. 2. lxxvii. 7. Matth. xxv. 5.* Here is need of faith in a special manner,

1st, Believing with application the infinite efficacy of the blood and Spirit of Christ Jesus, *Heb. vii. 25.* The soul would behold that blood as the blood of the Son of God, *1 John i. 7.* and therefore of infinite efficacy to do away the greatest guilt; as the sea, to quench a house on fire, as well as a candle: his Spirit, as of infinite efficacy, as able to wipe away the deepest stains of sins, as others, *1 Cor. vi. 11.*: as a water-flood, sweeping away whole dunghills, as well as mole-hills.

2dly, Believing, that ye are still within the compass of the gospel offer, *Is. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.* Yea; it is directed to you in particular, as *Jer. iii. 1. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. II. i. 18. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* God has made no exception of sinners of any size, who will come in: though ordinarily a profane graceless life has an agreeable end; they that live gracelessly, for the most part dying hardened, sometimes in sullen despondency: yet the case of the thief on the cross, shews a possibility of its being otherwise.

Lastly, Believing, griping, and hanging by the promise of the gospel, over the belly of all objections, *Acts xvi. 31.* Though you are in a boisterous sea, where one wave comes after another to sweep you away; yet quit not your gripe, *Heb. x. 36.*: but hope against hope, as *Abraham* did; for it is pleasing to God, *Psal. cxlvii. 11.* and will have a good issue, as in the woman of *Canaan*.

2DLY, Consider in what shapes death may attack us. There is one way of coming into the world, but there are many

many ways of going out of it. Which of them may be ours, we know not: and therefore it concerns us to be ready to encounter death, and fight the last battle successfully, in whatever shape death come upon us. I will take notice of these four.

1. A violent death, by the hands of men. That is the heaviest of deaths, when it is in an ill cause; as in the case of malefactors, by the hand of public justice; and of men falling sacrifices to their own and others rage in their private godless quarrels. All I say to that, is, to advise you to live by faith, that ye may be preserved from such a death, *Prov. xxviii. 17. Matth. xxvi. 52.* But even in a good cause men may be brought to it, whether more solemnly by process of law, or summarily by the hands of bloody men. Death in that shape must be fought,

1st, Believing, that that was the kind of death which Christ died, and so has sanctified it to his own, that they may comfortably venture on it for his sake and cause. And the saints of the highest class have died so, dying martyrs, in numberless multitudes. Our Lord will have all his to lay their accounts with it, *Luke xiv. 26. If any man come to me, (says he), and hate not—his own life, he cannot be my disciple;* though he does not call them all to it. But many who have been called to it, have rejoiced in it as their honour.

2^{dly}, Believing that great truth with application, *Matth. xvi. 25. Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* When one's life comes in competition with the honour of Christ and the cause of truth, and they will, for saving themselves, make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; they lose their souls, to save their bodies for a little time: whereas they to whom Christ's honour is more dear than their own lives, their souls shall be saved eternally, and eternal glory will more than make up all their losses.

2. A painful death. Death in any shape can hardly want pain; but death is certainly more painful to some than to others. O what piercing pains, gripes, and torments, do some suffer at their death! What struggles and wrestlings have some with death, before their souls leave their bodies! What measure of these pains is allotted to us, we do not now know; but every one will at length feel his own part of them.

Our business is to bear them Christianly and patiently; and that we will never do to purpose, but by faith,

1st, Cleaving to Christ in them by faith, *Job xiii. 15.* and believing, that through his grace they shall have a comfortable

portable end in due time, 2 *Tim.* iv. 6. 7. 8. Faith's view of the eternal rest in heaven, is the best cordial in the pains of death. When the soul believes, that the last pain is coming up, the last sob; after which sorrow and sighing shall for ever fly away; that will make the man stand the shock of the sharpest pains Christianly and patiently.

2dly, Believing, that the body of death and sin, which thou hast had many a battle with in thy life, is by that means to be put to the door. Death came in by sin, and sin must go out by death. Every pain and gripe looseth a pin of the tabernacle; and according as death makes its progress in the believer's body, sin is the nearer to a removal out of his soul. And when death has perfected its work on the body, the soul shall then be perfected, *Heb.* xii. 23. A Christian will abide fore thrusts patiently, in the faith of this their thrusting out his worst enemy.

3dly, By the eye of faith discerning death unslung to thee, by the death of Christ. Our Lord Christ has said it, and done it, *Hos.* xiii. 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes: and therefore a dying saint should comfort himself in it, and believing sing, as in 1 Cor. xv. 55. 56. 57. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* That whereby the believer's dying body is pained, is not death's sting: he may therefore bear it the better. Death's sting stings the soul and conscience, and leaves the venom of the curse there, which will scorch the man eternally. These pains are but as a bee-sting in comparison of that.

3. A longsome or lingering death. Death makes quick harvest with some, but with others death's work is spun out to a great length; whereby they have many deaths in one, are often looking for the last stroke, but it is long a-coming. This is a great trial, and we know not but it may be ours. Therefore we should be prepared for it, and lay up timely for it. We will never manage it well, but by faith,

1st, Believing always that it is coming; but at what hour, we know not. The faith of this will make us keep up our watch, *Matth.* xxiv. 42. They may watch at first, who may let down their watch when they find the Bridegroom delays his coming; and so they may be surpris'd, as
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the foolish virgins when their lamps were out. But the faith of this will put us on Job's resolution, chap. xiv. 14. *All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.*

2dly, Believing, that therein the Lord has you upon your trials, 1 Pet. i. 6. 7. He is in that case taking a trial of your faith, love, patience, and Christian fortitude. And if God opens to any of us a scene of trial of more variety and greater length than that of others, it is our business to be-
 • have well in the trial laid to our hand.

3dly, By the eye of faith discerning the eternal weight of glory, on the other side of the trial: and if we weigh the one by the other, the most longsome struggle with death will appear both light and momentary, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 18. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.*

4. Lastly, A sudden death. Death sometimes makes a wide step, so that it is upon a man ere he can well perceive it coming. It is what may be our lot; for it is common to good and bad. Good *Est* died so, as well as *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who died with a lie in their mouth. And therefore it concerns us to be prepared for it; which we can never be but by believing. And,

1st, Securing ourselves within the true ark, timely, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and accepting him in the offer of the gospel-covenant, *John* i. 12. Then come death when and how it will, we are habitually ready for it: and it shall not be able to loose the marriage-knot cast by faith betwixt Christ and our souls, *Rom.* viii. 38. &c. If in that case, it come suddenly on us, it shall but waft us over more speedily into *Immanuel's* land.

2dly, Resolutely renewing the actings of faith on Christ, at death's sudden approach, *Jf.* xlv. 22. What a man has done before, he may the more easily do again on a signal given: and a believer may through grace renew his acting of faith, upon death's short warning. If death be sudden, the act of faith may be as sudden, as reaching in a moment from earth to the highest heavens; and therefore compared to a look.

And thus I have gone through the Christian warfare, even to the last battle. May the Lord thus teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight.